WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 7, NO. 9 | THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION | JANUARY 1997

"...he who cannot change the very fabric of his thoughts will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress." Anwar Sadat

In Support of the Olympia Police Guild

Standing Up to Mayor Jacobs

Teresa Jennings and Sylvia Smith

Collective bargaining is under attack in Olympia by Mayor Bob Jacobs. During the November 5th City Council meeting he announced that he will be working to rewrite the collective bargaining law of Washington state. [See below] He has complained how the laws are written and yet has not clearly stated what specifically he would change. But he has attack the wages and benefits of police officers and has made a lot of erroneous statements in public. Although he has tried to save face or put a more acceptable spin on his remarks, he has not backed down from his agenda with the Legislature. We don't believe the citizens of Olympia elected him to pursue this course of action.

On December 15th, Carolyn Barclift, president of the Olympia Police Guild, wrote in response to Mayor Jacob's comments. "He was confronted in the December 3rd Council meeting, and said he supports collective bargaining. However, his remarks in that meeting included his statement that he will continue to address the issue. We believe if successful, his efforts will lessen the power of collective bargaining. We are disappointed in his position..." Ms. Barclift has made a plea before the Thurston/Lewis Central Labor Council for support. In response the Labor Council took the position "that the wages of law enforcement officers and firefighters should not be on the table for balancing municipal budgets. The remarks made by the mayor showed a lack of vision as well as some degree of ineptness for a leadership position. The Guild has our support in their stand on principle."

We are encouraging, as requested by the Police Guild, a *forceful* response by citizens though a letter writing campaign to city council members. Anytime labor is attacked, all labor needs to respond. In the past, WIP has examined the actions of individual police officers and OPD management. This should not be construed has being anti-police officer. Our purpose has been to primarily expose bad management and its results.

The Olympia Police Department, which has been allowed by the City Council and City Manager to disintegrate over the last seventeen years, has become a fear-ridden, loyalty-based rather than merit-based working environment. The stress of police work is compounded by the irrational and inconsistent reward/discipline, and overbearing supervision undermining officer effectiveness. The result is a high turnover and a less experienced police force.

"... remarks made by the mayor showed a lack of vision as well as some degree of ineptness for a leadership position. The Guild has our support in their stand on principle."

We respectfully suggest a responsible management style that is patrol officer centered. Patrol officers would be recognized as experts rather than as functionaries, subordinates responding to orders. The role of management should be to support in making police officers more effective. This

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Mayor Jacobs Attacks Collective Bargaining

The following transcript details Olympia Mayor Bob Jacobs' statements during the November 5, 1996, Olympia City Council meeting. We are asking for any assistance you deem appropriate in response to his remarks. After reading this, if you are dissatisfied with his position on this issue, we ask you contact him to express your concerns. — Carolyn Barclift, President, Olympia Police Guild

Bob Jacobs: I've got a couple comments on item 4L, the Police Guild's contract, which we're approving this evening. I, along with everyone else in the City, am glad that this has finally come to a conclusion. Two things I wanted to mention specifically. There is from time to time, I see articles in the newspaper and talk to people who have the impression that police officers are not paid very well. How well a police officer is paid of course is anyone's judgment as to how well they should be paid. I do want to point out a beginning, police officer after four years of experience, according to this staff report, will be making $45,900 a year. This is an addition to a very substantial benefits package and police officers get a certain amount of overtime. That's after four years of experience. That's with only a high school diploma and all training paid for by the city. That's just a fact. I'm not going to say that's adequate or inadequate. But I think it's a fact that many people don't know. Second thing I want to do is express a concern. And that is as I've watched these negotiations happen over a period of years, it seems to me because of the way the state law is written, we have police and fire salaries going up four to five percent each year. And we have other salaries going up two or three percent each year. This is on a continual basis. That pattern is not sustainable. It cannot go on forever. And I for one am going to bring this as forcefully as I can before the state legislature to deal with it before it gets completely out of hand over a period of years. Any other comments or questions?

Mark Foutch: By we, you're talking about municipalities in general?

Bob Jacobs: I will be bringing it personally to the legislative attention and through the Association of Washington Cities.

Mark Foutch: You're talking about the trend...

Bob Jacobs: The trend is not just in this city. The trend is statewide. It's due to the way the state's collective bargaining laws are written.

Holly Gadbaw: You're on the legislative committee, Bob, have they agreed to take this up as part of their legislative agenda?

Bob Jacobs: They've agreed to gather data preliminary to consider so they're in the data gathering process now.

Mark Foutch: That's the A.W.C. (Association of Washington Cities) legislative committee you're talking about?

Bob Jacobs: That's right. At my request.

Holly Gadbaw: Will they have the data in time to take any action this legislative session?

Bob Jacobs: I don't know. I'll be watching that very carefully and checking with them.

Olympia Police Guild Responds

Carolyn Barclift

Olympia City Mayor Bob Jacob's comments were made in regards to the recent City Council ratification of their contract with the Olympia Police Guild. Mayor Jacobs' comments raise issues of concern for anyone in a union by threatening the employees rights to collective bargaining. Let me clarify some of his statements:

• The salary of a police officer in his fifth year with the Olympia Police Department is the same salary of an officer with more than 20 years of service with this agency. It is accurate that, under the new contract, top step salary for a fifth year officer is $45,900 annually. There is no additional monetary compensation for longevity.

• He said we have a very substantial benefits package but fails to mention our officers do not receive some of the benefits other police departments have, benefits that are one of the reasons our work force is being drained by other departments. Among those benefits are social security, deferred compensation programs, full on-duty disability benefits, full medical/dental to include corrective lenses, longevity pay, shift differential, and so on.

• Mayor Jacobs said, in a meeting between me and him, and in the presence of another officer, that part of our substantial benefits package is our retirement system. This is a state mandated and managed retirement system. For police officers and fire fighters hired after 1979, this is the LIOFF II retirement system. The retirement age is 55 years old. Studies show a life expectancy for a police officer is 58 years old. LEOFF II members pay a higher percentage of their income into this retirement system than do members of any other state mandated retirement systems. As it

(Continued on page 4)

Write letters in response to:

Mayor Bob Jacobs

Council Members: Holly Gadbaw Mark Foutch; Jeanette Hawkins Pat Cole; Laura Ware; Margaret McPhee; Pat Cole

PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507

Please send a copy to the Olympia Police Guild at the same address.

Fresh Perspectives From Nicaragua...

Please welcome Luis Enrique Miranda Baez from Santo Tomas

Arriving from Nicaragua in mid-January is Luis Enrique Miranda Baez, a Sandinista university student in the capitol city of Managua, from our sister community of Santo Tomas. Luis Enrique will be here for a month long visit under the auspices of the Thurston-Santo Tomas Sister County Association.

Come to a welcoming potluck for Luis Enrique, followed by some live music, possibly of the danceable variety: Friday, January 17th at 6:30 pm, 1224 E. Legion Way (the First United Methodist Church at Legion and Boundary) in Olympia. Bring good food, family, and friends. We'll provide the beverages, plates and silverware. Call 866-1912 for more info.

While visiting Thurston County, Luis Enrique will give several public talks as well as a few presentations in area schools. He'll also promote an on-going college student project in Santo Tomas. Luis Enrique was a facilitator for last year's Evergreen State College students who spent spring quarter in Nicaragua, studying Spanish and volunteering in community projects. He has also helped with the delivery and distribution of donated material aid that TSTSCA has sent on Pastors for Peace caravans to Nicaragua over the last few years. He recently wrote "the dental equipment and supplies that just arrived with Patrick Piazza (TESC student and Alaska fisherman) on this caravan will serve many people in our town who just don't have the money to pay the private dentists." The generous response from Puget Sound area dentists will be put to good use in the Clinica Popular, a non-profit health clinic created by community activists in Santo Tomas in response to the deteriorating national health care system in Nicaragua.

Luis Enrique is very involved in the national university student movement. Since the elections of 1990 when the Sandinista Party lost to the United Nicaraguan Opposition Party (the US financed and organized coalition), the government has not been complying with the constitutional mandate to support the national universities. 6% of the national budget is still legally required to be deposited into the university coffers to continue to make higher education accessible to scholastically prepared citizens, regardless of class background and privilege. University education was free for all academically qualified students in the 'eighties, and the people have not forgotten this benefit of the revolution. Students and non-students alike have demanded that the constitution be upheld. In December of 1995, two people were killed, and many more were wounded, by police fire on a large "6%" demonstration in Managua. The public was outraged, and ominously pointed out that the police hadn't killed anyone in a demonstration since the days of the Somoza family dictatorship (46 years of brutal rule until 1979). Luis Enrique wrote that the situation is expected to only get worse under the new president, Aleman, who won fraudulently. He confirmed the progressive US media reports about boxes of ballets found partially burned and total vote counts changed between some polling sites and the telegraphed results to the supreme electoral council. These and other "electoral irregularities" did not deter the Clinton administration from recognizing and congratulating Aleman after only a small percentage of the vote came in. Business as usual for the US State Department.

Luis Enrique's mother Dora Aurora Baez Bravo visited Thurston County in October of 1995 along with another Santo Tomas community activist named Reyna Cabrera Raudez. Reyna is a school teacher and Dora Aurora is in charge of the grass roots organized children's' free lunch program (350 kids daily). Dora Aurora was also a minority party member on the city council. Perhaps some Works in Progress readers met these women during their three week stay, and learned first hand about some of the conditions that Nicaragua is faced with under the weight of the IMF? Now come hear perspectives from a young man involved in the struggle to keep Nicaragua from collapsing under the tremendous political polarization and the strain of "austere economic adjustments."

*** Luis will speak at TESC on Wednesday, Jan. 22nd at 1 pm in the Library Lobby.**

*** You can also find him at the Latin American Solidarity Organization's Dinner and Dance on Friday, Jan. 24th at 6 pm in the Longhouse at Evergreen.**

*** He'll be at the Liberation Cafe on Friday, Jan. 31st at 7 pm.**

*** Please post on your calendars the "must attend" farewell potluck dinner and dance, to culminate Luis Enrique's trip, on Feb. 8th somewhere in downtown Olympia ... location to be announced soon.**

Again, call 866-1912 for details of Luis Enrique's schedule or other questions about TSTSCA.

WIP Schedule

Submission deadline:
Friday, Jan. 24
6pm at Liberation Cafe

Call 705-2726 for info.

Proofreading Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 7 pm
TBA Call 705-2726 for place.

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

Mission Statement: "Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause: We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

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Evelyn Montague	Dave Zink

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Correspondence/articles are always welcome. Articles on disk (text preferred). WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507.

LETTERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christian Science Monitor's Disservice

Dear Editor:

We enjoy the Christian Science Monitor at our house, and read it every day. I must take issue with a couple of articles in your Tuesday, Oct. 22 issue, however.

First, re: the article on page 7, written by Howard LaFranchi: on "Nicaragua's Bitter Election." Mr. LaFranchi characterizes Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega as a "Marxist Dictator." Where did he get that from - old press releases from the Reagan and Bush administrations? Yes, he may be a Marxist, but no, he wasn't a "Dictator." Far from it.

In all the years of the Somoza dynasty, the American government was silent about abuses of human rights and the lack of democracy in Nicaragua. Why? Then, with Sandinista leadership, Nicaragua made great advances in both literacy and democracy. But the United Fruit Company and the elite of that country felt that their special privileges were threatened when the FSLN dared to conduct land reform. Imagine: giving land to those who actually worked it! Empowering the people was just too much for the ruling oligarchy and their allies. The propaganda mills soon began their campaign of disinformation.

In 1987, I was part of an interdenominational Pastors for Peace delegation to Nicaragua to help undo some of the damage that U.S. policy was inflicting upon that country by the contras (the cocaine-smuggling terrorists that the Reagan & Bush administrations funded with millions of our tax dollars. It is very likely that the contras would soon have been out of business if not for this support.) Terrorists, pure and simple, with little if any popular base. Above all else, that was the one fact that the Christian community, Catholic and Protestant, wanted us to tell everybody when we returned home.

LaFranchi said that Ortega gave Nicaragua 30,000% inflation. Yes, there was terrible inflation those days. But it wasn't Ortega or the FSLN that brought it. It was the direct result of the terrible U.S. government-sponsored sabotage, harassment, and blockade that were perpetrated against the people of Nicaragua (and continues to this day against Cuba!), again, using our tax dollars. We brought down medical supplies for the rural health clinics that the contras had bombed. Farming cooperatives, clinics, hydroelectric projects, as well as clergy, nuns, and leaders guilty of nothing except democratic organizing were targets for the contras. Many completely innocent people lost their legs, arms, or lives from contra-placed bombs. The Reagan-Bush administrations did everything they could to stop the "dangerous example" of a small, impoverished nation daring to stand up for human rights and decency.

In the Sandinista years, citizens were actively encouraged to participate in the decision-making process. What a difference from the Somoza dictatorship! There were committees and community forums in the countryside and in the barrios of Managua. Meetings were frequently held. Christian socialist base communities were established. One thing that especially struck me was the lively and energetic people's masses and church meetings. Masses in that part of the world are typically very solemn - not lively celebrations!

Reagan's stated goal was to make Nicaragua "cry uncle." It did. When the US intervened in the elections that brought Chamorro to power, it committed acts that no American would ever knowingly tolerate if any foreign power tried it here. Millions more of our tax dollars were spent on the Chamorro campaign. The threat: if the FSLN were re-elected, contra harassment would intensify.

Today, the Sandinistas remain Christian socialist revolutionaries. "Godless Communism?" Hardly. Their guiding philosophy, which is gaining in popularity throughout Latin America is Liberation Theology. This is a fertile hybrid of Marxist sociology and economics allied with religious belief and moral conviction. You'll see pictures of Che Guevara and Jesus sharing the same wall in favelas and in homes of campesinos throughout Latin America. Haiti's Father Bertrand Aristide is another well-known liberation theologian. We could use some of this theology right here in the USA - maybe we'd finally be able to resolve some of our long-festering problems! The second objection I had to your October 22nd issue was the lack of coverage of the one candidate for president that is talking about a root cause of so many of our country's problems: the subversion of American democracy and the destruction of environmental quality by Trans-National Corporations. Ralph Nader. Why take up so much print on disaffected Republicans and right-wing conspiracy kooks, like Howard Phillips, but not Ralph Nader, his running-mate Chippewa Indian activist Winona LaDuke, and the Green Party ?? They have the answers to questions more and more of us are beginning to ask.

When you print articles like this, you do the truth, and us readers of the Christian Science Monitor a disservice. Please, let's have more honest, objective, and factual coverage!

Dave Zink

Calling All Species!!!

Planning is underway for the third annual Procession of the Species Celebration, to be held next April during Olympia's spring Arts Walk. Join Earthbound Productions in making this spectacular celebration of art and environment one of the highlights of our region. Attend the next planning meeting Saturday, January 18 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Olympia Center, (222 N. Columbia St.), in Multipurpose Room B. Find out what's in the works for this year's celebration, including art and music workshop offerings. Meet like-minded community members and share your ideas for celebrating the natural world through art! Species of all backgrounds and skills are invited to create this year's parade. Need more info? Call Earthbound at 705-1087.

THE EARTH DAY EVERY DAYRADIOSTATION PROJECT

by Traci Hickson & Dennis Hendricks

The Earth Day Every Day Radio Station Project is a coalition of individuals and organizations, which believes the media has a responsibility (not currently in evidence) to adequately inform the public regarding current and forecasted threats to the biological integrity of the Earth. In working together to establish a radio station in a metropolitan area of the U.S. devoted to fully integrated (socio-environmental) programming, the coalition intends to initiate positive changes within the listening area and to influence sources of mainstream media by providing a clear example of responsible ecological broadcasting.

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Citizen Rights

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Many companies use direct mail and telemarketing to reach consumers. If you do not wish to be solicited, some companies let you opt out of these programs.

To reduce the number of direct mail or telephone solicitations you receive, write to the companies that are contacting you and ask to be removed from their lists. Also, watch for special billing inserts provided by some companies which let you exclude your name from their lists.

To control what information about you is kept, say "no" to telemarketers who want more information than you feel is necessary and to those who refuse to send follow-up explanatory materials.

Under Federal law, the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, a telemarketer who calls you cannot continue to call you if you have requested that the calls stop.

Companies with 800 or 900 numbers can use a number identification technology to record your telephone number when you call. Some firms use your number to help retrieve your records faster and improve the quality and speed of handling your call. Be aware when you call that firms may also match your number to your name and address to add to customer lists created for marketing or service purposes.

Contact the Mail Preference Service and the Telephone Preference Service of the Direct Marketing Association (DMA). Your name can be removed from (or added to) the lists of DMA members who participate in these programs. You will still get some mail and calls, but this will help reduce the volume.

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(Standing Up, cont. from page one)
management style is anti-authoritarian, hierarchy turned on its head. This management style simply means giving officers what they need to do their jobs: adequate numbers of cars, headquarters, training, benefits and a say in how work is performed. If there was a police officer focused department, the management would work to strengthen the police guild and collective bargaining, not undermine them.

The Olympia City Council, City Manager Dick Cushing and Chief John Wurner have responsibilities for the problems within this department. The problems did not develop overnight, and neither will they go away so quickly. We have seen some council members step up to accepting their responsibility and taking part in reaching solutions. We've not seen either Dick Cushing or John Wurner take responsibility. Rather, what we did see, was bickering early on between the two in local media.

Chief Wurner declares the goals of OPD 2000 will be reached in the six months he requested. The end of January, 1997, will bring proof one way or the other. It is our on going belief that the citizens of Olympia deserve better leadership than they've received. "Citizens now need to provide direction to city hall." Now is the time to stand and be heard. There is no greater opportunity than now. Is leadership from Chief Wurner improving? Is leadership from Dick Cushing improving? "How much longer must we tolerate a mayor who wants to denigrate collective bargaining and the Olympia Police Guild?" And when will some of our council members, silent on the issue of collective bargaining and Mayor Jacobs' comments, come forward and declare their positions?

Please write your letters. Olympia City Council members must be questioned on their positions regarding collective bargaining, management of not only the police department, but of the city by their manager as well. Remember, there will be four city council positions opening up in the next election. ✸

(Police Guild, cont. from page one)
stands now, if a 39 year old Olympia Police Officer with 13 years of service was forced to medically retire tomorrow due to an on-the-job injury, that officer would receive less than $239 per month in retirement *before taxes*. After taxes, that same officer could not afford his/her medical premiums.

• Mayor Jacobs said, "Police officers get a certain amount of overtime." He didn't say we've been so understaffed for such an extended period of time that officers, on occasion, have to be ordered to work overtime. He also failed to acknowledge that patrol officers work to protect our community on holidays while others, including him, enjoy the comfort of their family and home.

• Concern is strongly centered around other statements Jacobs presented as fact and for which he has no supporting documentation. When I met with him on November 26th, Jacobs said data is being collected for him now. Jacobs said the statewide trend has police and fire salaries increasing 4% to 5% each year, a trend existing "over a period of years" and due to "the way the state's collective bargaining laws are written." On November 26th he had to concede he has nothing to show such local or statewide trends exist. He said he believes this to be true, based on information he has received from staff "over the years". However, it's not true so no amount of data will support his "belief".

• The Olympia Police Guild contract expired June 30, 1995. We began negotiations with the City in January, 1995. We moved to mediation before the contract expired. The City did not place a wage package on the table until October, 1995. When it was clear mediation was unsuccessful, both sides requested binding arbitration-the tool mandated for us by law for settling disagreements. Police and fire employees may mot strike or participate in a work slowdown or stoppage. The resulting threat that would be imposed on the public would be severe if strike or stoppage occurred. In the end, however, we didn't go to arbitration. In October this year we sought additional meetings with the City, went back to the table and settled our differences. This contract was not forced on the City Council by arbitration.

• As a follow-up note to our contract settlement it's important to understand that during the last two meetings, the meetings where our settlement was hammered out, the lead negotiator we'd dealt with throughout this process was accompanied by a reasonable and courteous labor attorney. We firmly believe we would not have been able to reach agreement with the city's negotiator had the attorney not been there.

• Jacobs said he is going to "bring this as forcefully as [he] can before the state legislature to deal with it before it gets completely out of hand..." This is a definite threat to all employees in this state who are subject to our collective bargaining laws. One only has to look at the 1995 Amendments to the Oregon State Collective Bargaining laws and the subsequent failure of the 1996 Measure 43 to see the dangers in Mayor Jacobs' statements.

• One hundred percent of officers have some college education. The average per officer is 21/2 years. ✸

Officer Carolyn Barclift is the president of the Olympia Police Guild.

One only has to look at the 1995 Amendments to the Oregon State Collective Bargaining laws and the subsequent failure of the 1996 Measure 43 to see the dangers in Mayor Jacobs' statements.

Mayor's Comments Damage Relationship With Police Officers

John Tupper

Ed. Note: The following is a letter sent to Mayor Jacobs in response to his comments regarding collective bargaining, just compensation and minimum qualification for police officers. (See page one)

Dear Mayor:

I am writing to you about comments you made at a recent city council meeting. Many of your comments were veiled such that someone not affected by your statements may not fully understand the magnitude of what you were saying. What you said was filled with misstatements of fact, and if you made those misstatements knowing they were just that, then you lied. If you did not know the true facts, then your comments were irresponsible.

I am a police officer for Olympia, and have been for nearly 11 years. And in all that time I have never felt so devalued as an employee. I still can not believe you said the things you did, particularly in that forum. And also when this police department is trying to heal. The City Council was identified by the Pendleton Report as being "part of the problem", and your comments did a lot to damage that relationship that still needs to heal. I believe your statements were very unprofessional, and I encourage you to apologize to the police officers and firefighters of this city in the same forum as you maligned us.

For you to say that police and fire employees make too much money, and all with only a high school diploma is a real slap in the face. I have only a high school diploma. And I believe I am a very good police officer. I am a testament that a police officer does not need a college education. I am of the belief that continuing education is an asset, and all those so inclined should pursue that. No one can get too much education. But on the other hand we have officers that do have college education and they do not stand out as superior officers in any manner that would prove their education was necessary. So based on that, it is obvious to me that what it takes to be a police officer is something greater than just a college education. And those things are why we should be paid even more than we are. Every day we put our lives at risk. We face danger that could get us killed or injured. And this part of the job will even effect our families. Our spouses and children may never see us again each day we go to work. We take verbal abuse that would make a saint swear. We get spit on, kicked, punched, slapped, and have lies told about us to our superiors or in the media. We respond to cases where adults or children have been victimized beyond anything you probably could imagine, and keep our heads, be impartial, and function where a lot of the public could not. We have to make split second decisions that can decide whether someone lives or dies, or other decisions of great magnitude that most people would want hours or days to ponder. I could go on and on, because I have only touched the tip of the iceberg. But if you would like, the next time we have a violent prisoner with hepatitis in jail that has smeared feces all over his body, we will call you to subdue him, and tell us if you think we get paid too much.

And your comments about collective bargaining is precisely why it is needed, to protect us from leaders like you.

But you know the funny thing about this? If you or your family was victimized tomorrow, God forbid, you would get the same great service from the officers and firefighters that you have denigrated, as the rest of the city.

I look forward to your public apology to us in the very near future. Anything less will be unacceptable and just another slap in the face. But understand that an apology will not necessarily fix what has been said and there may be other consequences. ✸

"...your comments about collective bargaining is precisely why it is needed, to protect us from leaders like you."

Make your impression

Works In Progress is in need of individuals with the following skills:

Computer Layout
Cartoon Creation
Interviewing
Distribution
Graphic Art
Proofreading
Tape Transcription
Photography

This publication is a dialog challenging the corporate media while expanding the Progressive Society. The written word demands respect and, the development of materials published, establishes the identity and values of the contributor and deepens the philosophical understandings of the community. Contributing to the publication of *Works In Progress* is more than a commitment to "walk the talk", it's *a sense of accomplishment.*

Business and Police Join Forces In Takeover

Zemora Moon

Out of all the cities I have visited or lived in Eugene, Oregon has the absolute worst police department and it is about time people know about it. I lived in Eugene for 5 years between 1990 and 1995 and what I saw there was a gradual takeover of the community by the business class and the police.

When I first moved to Eugene from Phoenix in 1990, I moved because it felt safe and liberally inviting. For the most part the police activity stayed around the semi-violent, drunken college life near the University of Oregon and the typical harassment of young people downtown. I was lucky to find a house in a great community in the westside neighborhood where I did not see the police too much. Within my first year there the police surrounded and tear gassed a party of drinking college kids and I received my first taste of police violence there. Not surprised that the police could drastically mistreat a situation I took note but was content that most of their activity remained near the campus. About the only site of the police I noticed in the westside was the two regular police cars at the slaveway parking lot near a cluster of apartment complexes known locally as 'sin city' for no other reason in my eyes than that they were lower class residences with a few small minority groups. Then the first strike happened when the police tear gassed a small westside gathering in a private home and illegally searched the house, stole the keg and pepper sprayed several people directly in the face while doing so. While many have come to accept this kind of conduct by the police as 'normal' or even 'appropriate' I consider it trespassing, assault and a flagrant violation of our rights. This incident marked the time when my eye became carefully aware of police presence in that town.

Within the next year the pressure started stepping up. The police began routinely stopping bicyclists and sighting them for an increasing number of violations passed by the city council. Often friends of mine would receive hundreds of dollars of fines and be illegally searched while riding down a quiet neighborhood street to the local store without a light. Rarely did the people I know have such money to pay these fines as the economy in Eugene is very bad for artists or the working class; and thus began their plight. When they would show up for court with no money for bail they would be jailed for a few days, given extra fines, and little time to pay. When they could not pay these fines on time a warrant would be issued for their arrest and if they had a driver's license it would be revoked. If caught they would go to jail longer and rack up more fines. This became a frequent tool for harassment and abuse in our friendly neighborhood by the police. At this time I also noticed increased police car presence on our little neighborhood streets as well as a new habit of parking and driving on city park lawns to watch people in the parks.

From 1993 on, the police increasingly worked a policy of intimidation and harassment toward my community. The stakes really started getting high when the city council approved changing zoning laws and putting the Huyundai industrial computer chip plant in a pristine wetlands despite widespread opposition and large protests. This was the time when I witnessed the city council, police and the business class get scared and start to act on the 'liberal' half of the citizens.

The Vortex

For a few years, every summer a group of promoters put on a free reggae concert in the river park called 'Reggae on the Willamette' but in 1995 the permit was turned down twice by the city council with scant reason despite support by the people living nearby. This did not discourage the promoters and they put it on anyway under the name 'The Vortex'. Everything was going fine in the park and many people from the neighborhood were out enjoying the sunshine and music until the pigs showed up. The police came in small packs at first driving and marching on the lawn telling the people peacefully enjoying the park and the music to leave. The police made several rounds and warned vendors they would be arrested later if they were still there on the next round. The time came and the police began physically threatening a lady vendor when a crowd gathered around them with loud disappointment. The aggression of the police and the crowds aggressive chanting of things like "bad cop, no donut", "Fight the power", and "FUCK THE PIGS" escalated and peaked when the police placed Todd Delany of Hungry Bear Hemp Foods under arrest and he went limp. The police grabbed him and began pepper spraying the crowd around him; and then the shit hit the fan. The crowd went berserk and people began throwing anything they could find at the pigs and chasing them out of the park. I'm talking hundreds of people all at once, it was beautiful. The crowd eradicated the police out of the park and did some serious damage to their cars. Needless to say the police began to arrest innocent bystanders a mile away from the scene and abusing more rights for weeks thereafter, but the crowd's success spurred the largest neighborhood meeting I have ever seen at a local coffee shop. The group unity was so high that day that I am truly honored to have witnessed it. Unfortunately the momentum died within weeks and the struggle continued in small individual acts like usual.

Warner Creek

When several people were arrested at a forest protest camp in Warner Creek this last summer. The appearance of hundreds of protesters from all over the northwest at the courthouse for their arraignment prompted the Eugene police to more abuse and more than twenty were arrested including a reporter for the local newspaper who had his camera and notes illegally seized. This prompted the normally conservative Register Guard to run articles condemning police action.

13th Street (witness accounts)

Last spring the police put in a trailer for "community policing" on the corner of 13th and Patterson at the 7/11 were there is a busy business district and a high amount of young people hanging out. They installed a video camera to observe and record youth activities. Within the past two months the police collected signatures on a petition from the owners of all the 13th street businesses communicating their desire for the police to 'clean up' the street. On several days since then the police made over 100 simultaneous arrests for loitering including the arrest of children getting out of a private school at 3:30 in the afternoon prompting the principal to take action against the police.

The crowd went berserk and people began throwing anything they could find at the pigs and chasing them out of the park. I'm talking hundreds of people all at once, it was beautiful. The crowd eradicated the police out of the park and did some serious damage to their cars.

Schobert Park

When I moved to the west side I was pleased that there was a park down the street called Schobert Park that had a real peaceful feeling to it. There was a community garden open to everyone with several fruit trees, berry bushes and plenty of vegetables and herbs free for the picking. There were often many people socializing there. Every summer the car campers would arrive to live in the surrounding streets fairly discreetly. The cops would make their annual sweep and kick them out, but this never worked to their satisfaction. Undercover police surveillance became routine. Then around 1994 the police decided they didn't like the social activity in the park and began arresting people and parking on the park lawn (which could only fit about two of their cars) and people stopped attending the park except late at night and the park became more dangerous. Then early in 1996 the woman who owns the Red Barn, a local health food rip off market, became involved in the park and decided it would be a good idea to fence off the community garden for use of property owners in the neighborhood and they agreed; so in went the gate complete with lock and key. Later this summer, that same woman and the surrounding property owners decided to fence off the whole park for private use. This culminated in a large protest by the neighborhood people where the police showed up in riot gear. Several witnesses reported there were more police than protesters. A temporary solution was found where the lawn was left for the public, but all surrounding plant trails were off limits.

Routine Beatings

There have been several friends of mine beaten up badly by the police in front of crowds of witnesses.

Conclusion

The police in Eugene are bad. The city council is moving in more large corporations and two of the largest buildings downtown are brand new banks to fund the expansion of this once small and peaceful town. The situation is out of control there. When I go down to visit my neighborhood, I see at least four brand new police cars drive by every 20 minutes and even the average person lives in fear of them. The ironic thing is that the crime in the neighborhood kept getting worse after more cops appeared. In my observation the crime would happen as a direct result of more cops. Perhaps people began resorting to illegal activity to pay their exorbitant fines. One rumored theory going around the conspiracy underground is they are deliberately attempting to put a ghetto in that neighborhood by moving in heroin. I wouldn't put it past them.

Don't let this happen to your town wherever you are.

Northwest Leonard Peltier Support Network

SECOND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH LEONARD PELTIER -- February 6, 1997

Arthur J. Miller

The International Office of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee has issued the call for the SECOND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH LEONARD PELTIER. This year's Day of Solidarity will focus on building support for Executive Clemency and for Congressional hearings into the U.S. Government's role, abuse and coverup in the "Incident at Oglala" on the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation and the case of Leonard Peltier. This call of solidarity asks that supporters of Leonard Peltier hold rallies at Federal buildings throughout the U.S and world wide at U.S. Embassies and Consulates on that day.

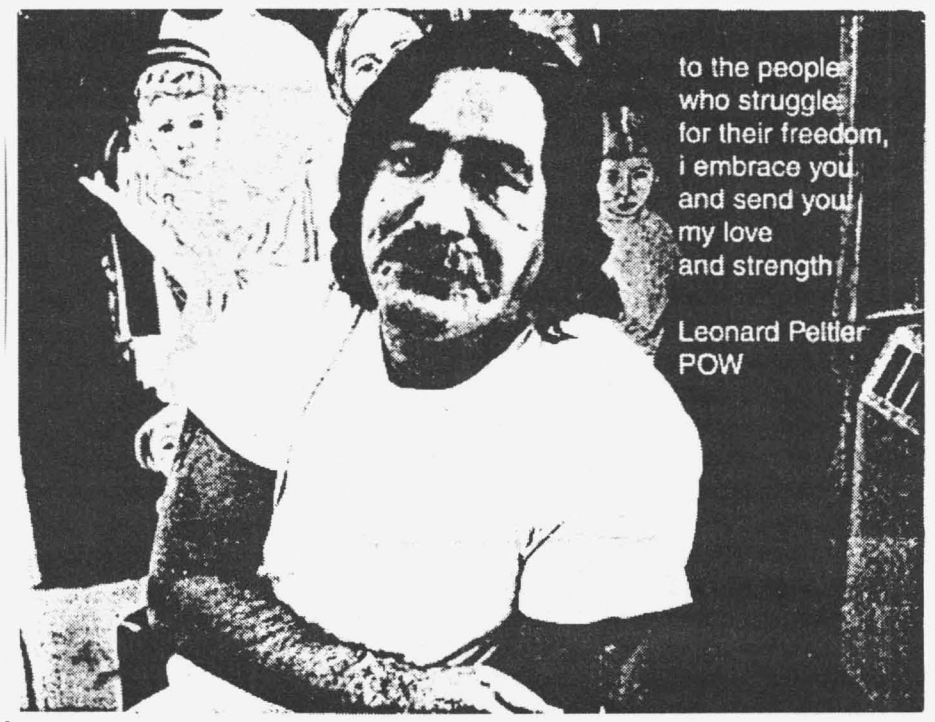
IF RUBY RIDGE. WHY NOT PINE RIDGE!?

The U.S. Government claims to believe in equal justice for all, peace and freedom. but the U.S. Government cannot be judged by its words alone; for its' actions show that it does not believe in justice. Whereas, the U.S. Congress would instigate the abuse of power at Ruby Ridge and in the case of self proclaimed white supremacists, but when it comes to people of color they turn their backs and justice is denied. So we ask of all U.S. Government officials "IF RUBY RIDGE. WHY NOT PINE RIDGE!?" And we demand an answer. And the refusal to answer us is a clear statement to the world that the U.S. Government still supports white supremacy.

In the case at Ruby ridge the government has admitted to abuse and coverup of their misdeeds. Even a high FBI official has pled guilty to the coverup in that case. In the tragedy at Pine Ridge and the case of Leonard Peltier the government's abuse and coverup is far greater. In that case the government acted out a conspiracy that included the illegal theft of Lakota land for uranium, fraudulent tribal elections, the arming of a death squad, murder and terrorism against the traditional people and the frameup of Leonard Peltier. We ask that all people who believe in social justice to join with us to send a clear message that justice denied to one is an injustice to all. And that justice be inclusive of ALL PEOPLE, not just white people.

The Background of Leonard's Case

Leonard Peltier is a Chippewa/ Lakota American Indian Movement activist and pipe carrier who was framed on the charge of killing two F.B.I. agents on the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation in South Dakota on June 16, 1975. The firefight that day was a direct result of the federal government's policy of suppression of traditional Native resistance to that government's greedy plans. In the case of Pine Ridge, the corporations and their government wanted uranium for the production of their weapons of mass death. They also sought to coverup the contamination from uranium mining of the Cheyenne River and the ground water beneath Pine Ridge. To this aim the federal government helped organize a death squad and in the two years before the firefight homes were shot-up, many people, including Elders and children, were wounded and over 60 traditional and A.I.M. people were killed. Traditional Lakota Elders asked A.I.M. for help and a camp was set up.



The day before the shootout part of Pine Ridge was turned over to the federal government in a secret meeting in Washington D.C. Also, on that day, federal agents came into the area overlooking the A.I.M. camp and many of the death squad members moved their families off Pine Ridge. Then on June 15, 1975, two cars came speeding down a dirt road leading to the camp in the same manner that death squad used in their "drive by" shootings throughout the area. The A.I.M. people defended themselves from what they saw as another murderous attack, in the firefight that took place, one A.I.M. member and two F.B.I. agents died.

In the first trial of those the federal government held responsible, two A.I.M.members were found to have acted in self-defense and were acquitted by an all white jury. Leonard was then extradited from Canada based upon false affidavits. His trial was moved to a smaller, racist town and the case was given to a known racist judge. At his trail his lawyers were not allowed to give the same evidence that was presented at the first trial that proved that A.I.M. only acted in self-defense. The federal government also fabricated evidence, intimidated witnesses and spied on the defense team.

Whereas, the U.S. Congress would instigate the abuse of power at Ruby Ridge and in the case of self proclaimed white supremacists, but when it comes to people of color they turn their backs and justice is denied.

Witnesses for the government, Myrtle Poor Bear, Michael Anderson, William Draper and Norman Brown all came forward and admitted that they were intimidated by the F.B.I. to give false statements. Leonard was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive life terms in prison. Over the years Leonard's lawyers have disproved the governments case but his appeals for a new trial have been turned down. During these proceedings, the F.B.I. held secret meetings with appeal judges and the Parole Board. The F.B.I. has still refused to turn over more than 6000 pages of documents, claiming they cannot do so because of national security, even though they claim Leonard's case was just a case of criminal ambush.

We firmly believe that if Leonard is given a fair hearing, be it a new trial or congressional hearings, and if the government does not perjure itself and follows the laws that it demands everyone else to follow, that Leonard will be declared innocent and the government will be found guilty of misdeeds and coverup. This can only happen if enough people demand it. At times like this, silence is collaboration with injustice.

PLEASE HELP IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS

1. Come out for, and help organize rallies on the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY FOR LEONARD PELTIER. Please send plans for rallies to the LPDC, P O Box 583, Lawrence KS 66044; and Arthur Miller, P O Box 5464 Tacoma WA 984150464.

2. Send letters requesting clemency and the release of the 6,000 pages of documents on Leonard's case to: Bill Clinton, President, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington DC 20500.

3. Send letters supporting Congressional hearings to: Senator Arlen Specter, United States Senate, SH530, Washington, DC 20510.

4. Send letters and/or call local federal elected representatives and official asking for support of the hearings.

5. Contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee for more information on how you can help: LPDC, P O Box 583, Lawrence KS 66044 Or in the Pacific Northwest, NWLPSN, 5201 Capital Blvd, Ste 119, Tumwater WA 98501.

6. Spread the word about the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH LEONARD PELTIER and Leonard's case through groups, organizations, publications and the Internet.

7. Help us spread the word world wide for this day of protest by sending a donation to NWLPSN, 5201 Capital Blvd, Ste 119, Tumwater WA 98501. The cost of this organizing is great, and we are completely dependent upon grassroots donations. At this time we lack the money to spread the word internationally as it should be done. Please help us. And remember the struggle for justice comes from you the people, and the struggle is not Only about justice for Leonard and the Original People of America, it is also about justice for all.

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From the Inside Out

Slaves for Sale or Rent

Dan Pens

Issues in the prison rights struggle are often superimposed over an "Us vs. Them" framework. "Us" includes prisoners, their family members and outside supporters, prison rights activists, proactive attorneys and paralegals, progressives and concerned citizens. Prison guards and administrators, law enforcement, politicians and conservatives are cast in the role of "them." These divisions are simplistic and not entirely accurate, but that doesn't prevent their continued use.

There is one issue which increasingly divides the "Us" half of the prison zeitgeist: prison labor, specifically "Free Venture" partnerships between prisons and private industries which employ prisoners to produce goods or services sold on the open market. Most of "Us" think that private industry/prison ventures offer a tremendous opportunity to prisoners. Some of "Us," and I think I'm in the minority here, view the private use of prison labor with alarm, if not outright condemnation.

Many people in society, however, are uninformed about prison labor issues. Most would be surprised to hear that their copy of *Microsoft Office* or bag of *Starbucks* coffee was packaged by Washington prisoners. Washingtonians might purchase window blinds assembled by prisoners in Monroe, mountain climbing equipment manufactured by prisoners in Eastern Washington, or drink a microbrew fermented in tanks fabricated by welders imprisoned in this state. You might be wearing a piece of clothing stitched by prisoners working in a Washington prison sweatshop operated by a private company. These are but a few of the items currently produced by prisoners employed by private companies in this state and sold on the open market.

You may wonder how private companies can operate inside Washington prisons. This month I will provide some historical background on the use of prison labor for private industry. Next month I will examine the issue from a contemporary perspective.

U.S. prisons in the nineteenth century were often little more than forced labor camps. The expectation of state lawmakers was that prisons should cost nothing to operate, or should even turn a modest profit. To that end, many states operated "lease prisons." New York is one example of this type. New York operated its prisons and "leased" the prisoners' labor to the highest bidder.

The other type of arrangement was typified by Louisiana, which opened its first penitentiary in 1835. In less than a decade the state legislature decided the costs of operating the penitentiary were unacceptable. In 1844 state lawmakers leased the entire penitentiary to McHatton, Pratt, and Company, a private firm which paid nothing for the five-year lease. The company was given free reign to operate the prison and exploit the prisoners' labor however they saw fit.

There was no small amount of corruption and abuse of prisoners under either system. For the sake of profit prisoners were housed in squalid conditions, fed spoiled food, and given scant clothing or shoes. In 1875, a Texas legislative commission investigated the privately operated Huntsville prison. Investigators found children as young as nine working in slave labor jobs elbow-to-elbow with adult convicts. The commission issued a report citing sleeping arrangements which were "decidedly filthy" and infested with vermin. The authors of the report were "at a loss for terms too sufficiently strong to condemn as inhuman and unfit for the purpose, the place in the Penitentiary miscalled a hospital."

Though there were provisions in most contracts with private operators mandating minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, there was little or no state oversight. Whippings were commonplace. Dr. Lewis Wynne, executive director of the Florida Historical Society says that since states rarely monitored prison conditions, operators of lease prisons often worked prisoners to death. Mortality rates, Dr. Wynne said, ran as high as 40 percent. Prison labor, he said, also became a way to deal with so-called "uppity blacks." For instance, in 1878 Georgia leased the labor of 1,239 prisoners to private entities, of which 1,124 were black. As a consequence, the Klu Klux Klan basically disbanded after 1870. "It wasn't that it died out," Dr. Wynne said. "There just wasn't a need for it."

There was also no shortage of corruption and mismanagement in private/public prison partnerships. In 1851, the California Assembly granted two businessmen a ten-year lease to operate San Quentin. A legislative committee visited the prison seven years later and found conditions so appalling that the legislature hurriedly passed a bill declaring the lease null and void, restoring the prison to state control. The businessmen were politically well connected, however. They sued the state for breach of contract, eventually winning back control of the prison. The state was forced to pay $200,000 to buy out the remainder of the lease.

But there was one factor which more than anything else spelled the doom of nineteenth century prison labor exploitation. The concerted protests of both labor and competing private industries eventually ended the private exploitation of prison labor. It took a hundred years, though.

Shoemakers in 1801 objected to the manufacture of shoes in New York's Newgate prison. They protested for four decades before New York passed the 1842 Labor Law prohibiting private contractors from using convict tradesmen unless they had learned their trade before coming into the prison.

In 1886, presidents of wagon factories, shoe, furniture, and stove companies, chiefly from Midwestern states, gathered in Chicago to hold their convention. Here they formally drafted a declaration calling for the elimination of the unfair competition of rival companies which exploited prison slave labor.

In Louisiana, free workers protested the lease system because it consumed jobs on plantations, farms, and railroads. A minority report read at the state Democratic Convention in 1883 noted "That the employment of convicts outside the walls of the Penitentiary is detrimental to the interests of the honest labor portion of the... State... that it brings this species of slave labor in competition with honest industry to the great pecuniary profit of the penitentiary lesee, but with disastrous results as far as the honest free labor of our state is concerned."

Washingtonians might purchase window blinds assembled by prisoners in Monroe, mountain climbing equipment manufactured by prisoners in Eastern Washington, or drink a microbrew fermented in tanks fabricated by welders imprisoned in this state.

The final majority report condemned the lease system and called for its replacement with a system of public works (e.g. chain gangs). Despite this call for abolition, the battle continued to rage for two more decades. Leasing did not disappear from Louisiana until 1901.

In the 1870's, competitors of the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company charged that their use of convict labor gave the company an unfair competitive advantage. The protest fell on the deaf ears of state lawmakers, though, and Tennessee's lease system continued unabated.

In 1891, the company locked out all of its union workers for refusing to sign a "yellow dog" contract that would have barred them from union membership. The company replaced the locked out workers with lease convicts in an attempt to break the strike.

In what was dubbed "The Coal Creek Rebellion," angry union miners stormed the lease prisons and released more than 400 convicts. The company filled up the work camps with more prisoners. The embittered miners overran the work camps a second time, this time burning the stockades to the ground. They then rounded up all the released prisoners and herded them onto a train headed for the state capital. This finally gained the attention of state law makers. Shortly thereafter, Tennessee dismantled its lease labor prison system.

By the beginning of this century most other states had followed suit, enacting a patchwork of state laws abolishing or restricting the use of prison labor by private enterprises. In the South the use of slave labor continued in a different form. Southern states still used imprisonment to subjugate and control its black population. Rather than lease them out to private entities, however, Southern states formed chain gangs of prisoners and used them for the backbreaking work of road building. Most of the state and county roads in Southern states were thus constructed.

Two New Deal era federal laws, the Hawes-Cooper Act and the Ashurst-Sumners Act effectively ended the private business-convict labor relationship. Ashurst-Sumners made it illegal to transport prisonmade goods across state boundaries, irrespective of individual state laws. Thus ended the first round of private industry prison labor profiteering.

In next month's column I will explore the reemergence of prison labor exploitation by private firms. Until then, greetings from the gulag.

Dan Pens is coeditor of Prison Legal News. For a free sample issue, write:

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A Look at the Prison System & the Preservation of Injustice

Doug Wordell

In an eroding social landscape, prisons are playing an increasing role in undermining racial, economic and social justice. While the American public is fed lies about the need for more prisons for their wellbeing and safety, prisons in reality only perpetuate unhealthy and dangerous social behavior. In any serious attempt to confront the brutal reality of prisons one must first understand the society that creates a "need" for prisons. If society eradicates institutions that foster anti-social behavior (what bell hooks describes as the "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy") than the need for prisons would no longer exist.

The importance of analyzing prisons is of great importance to not only the prison population but to general society as well. This country's racism, sexism and classism are graphically illustrated by the penal system.

The importance of analyzing prisons is of great importance to not only the prison population but to general society as well. This country's racism, sexism and classism are graphically illustrated by the penal system.

The Assistant Commissioner of Corrections of Minnesota spelled out the nature of the prison system and the propaganda machine that preserves it saying:

"There is no evidence of a relationship between the incarceration rate and violent crime. We're in the business of tricking people into thinking that spending hundreds of millions (of dollars) for new prisons will make them safe."

Prisons serve specific interests in society and their primary role is to control a country's population not to stop crime. Michael Foulcault wrote "Let us conceive of places of punishment as a Garden of the Laws that families would visit on Sundays." Prisons are places where the public can be reminded what might happen to them if they step out of line and decide to perform a criminal act. So not only is the prison used to control the convict, it is also used to control the larger population as well. Punishment and the reminder of it, are the keys to obedient citizens; prisons are instruments of social control.

Part of this control is the defining of crime. The laws that we live under our not our own and do not address societies real needs. We need to redefine crime as the poor starve and freeze in our streets while the rich horde their wealth and privilege.

It was Aristotle who said "Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime." Since the capitalist system perpetuates so much poverty, those in power have to come up with ways to silence political dissent and keep the system from collapsing on it self. Those that are not in one way or another contributing to the wealth of a small elite in this country or internationally, those living in poverty, they must have their lives defined as criminal and prisons are their ultimate destination.

The History of the American Prison

In Auburn New York in 1817 the first American prison was put into use and it incorporated both separate confinement and silent collective work. It became the model for the prison system. It used convict labor for both government and private production. With the Convict Leasing System, the prisoners could be leased out to private bidders to be housed, fed, and worked as slaves. The huge potential for profit under this system led to its popularity in the South. Convict laborers worked in coal mines, brick yards, turpentine camps and public works projects such as road building.

Prisons made the abolishment of slavery in this country a farce. Slavery is still in existence in this country and is used by those who profit from the prison industry. Although slavery has changed its face significantly since the antebellum period, it still exists with in this country in a different form; that of prison labor.

The 13th amendment to the US Constitution states:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime where of the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

With the abolition of slavery in the South the Slave Codes turned into the Black Codes which were laws targeted at the black community to make black life criminal. Activities such as standing in an area of town or walking at night turned into the criminal acts of "loitering" and "breaking curfew". As soon as slavery ended the number of African-Americans that went to prison rouse dramatically.

Julie Browne, a prison and anti-racist activist, wrote in her senior thesis on convict labor that."

"In the late nineteenth century South, an extensive prison system was developed in the interest of maintaining the power, race and economic relationships of slavery."

The conditions that convicts faced were extremely brutal. In Tennessee women convicts working in a hosiery mill were flogged, hung by their wrists, or placed in solitary confinement as punishment when their productivity was poor. African-Americans were whipped so brutally that if they survived some of their wounds never healed. It was only because of strikes both on the inside and outside of the prison system and the tireless work of countless women activists, that convict leasing was finally abolished in every state by the 1930's.

The Current Prison System

The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. There is much evidence that the United States is creating a permanent criminal class that will serve a major part of the economy of the future. While resources that should be used to create the economic means for survival that impoverished communities in America so desperately need, these resources are instead going to build prisons to lock away a brighter future.

In the 1980's as poverty grew so did the prison system. Many social programs were slashed and by the end of

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the 80's prisons were the number one government program for the poor.

In 1995 one hundred and fifty new prisons were built and one hundred and seventy one existing prisons were expanded. The recent crime bill expanded the police force by hiring one hundred thousand new police officers. 1995 was also the first year that the state of California has spent more money on prisons than on higher education. Prison construction is one of the largest growth industries and is indicative of the continued squelching of justice in this country.

Unfortunately systems of labor imprisonment, are coming back in California with programs such as the PIA - the Prison Industry Authority. The PIA, a multi-million dollar industry, coerces prisoners work by withholding "privileges". Prisoners are screened to see what skills they have and then they are put to work accordingly, which contradicts the idea that the PIA gives convicts job training and education. Even though the PIA says that prisoners do not have to take part in the program if they refuse they do not have access to some of the prison "privileges". For every day that the prisoner works, a day is taken off their sentence. The prisoners are also classified into four different work/privilege groups: A = full time work, B = half time work, C = refuses to work and D = special segregation unit prisoners. Those prisoners classified as group C are "not entitled to family visits, and are limited to one-fourth of the maximum monthly canteen draw. Telephone calls are permitted only on an emergency basis as determined by the institution's staff. While access to the yard is allowed, no special packages or access to other recreational or entertainment activities are allowed." Prisoners do not volunteer for these programs, they are coerced into them.

There have been considerable shifts in the international economy that has allowed for mass incarceration to be profitable as well as politically desirable.

"The hypermobility of capital has created an economic setting that allows for mass incarceration, because there is no longer a strong economic need for a large, free, unskilled, unemployed population of workers in this country. Capital can easily expand its supply of labor to include any exploitable population of workers throughout the world, including incarcerated workers."

The Joint Ventures Program of the California Department of Corrections contracts out convict labor to "any public entity, nonprofit or for profit entity, organization, or business". The Inmate Labor Initiative of 1990 overturned the 1882 abolition of convict leasing in California with proposition 139. As of June of 1994, thirteen corporations were operating in the prison system in the state of California alone.

Who Goes To Prison

The demographics of the prison population shows that it is filled with people from low income neighborhoods and that the prison population is comprised disproportionately of people of color; the criminal justice system is overwhelmingly racist and classist.

In terms of class, fifty three percent of low income defendants serve time as opposed to only twenty six percent of high income defendants. Studies shown that over ninety percent of the adult population have committed crimes that could incarcerate them but the dragnets that seek to punish criminals are primarily located in impoverished neighborhoods. Seventy two percent of the prison population have not completed high school and in many neighborhoods due to lack of jobs, the only economic options open to people are criminal. Prisons are the ultimate destination for many people from low income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color. As Joel Olson coeditor of the radical publication The Blast points out going to prison is just the badge of being poor.

African-American males make up roughly six percent of the population of the United States, but yet they occupy fifty percent of the prison population. In county jails, Latinos comprise fourteen percent of the prison population - about twice their proportions in the larger population and Native Americans are disproportionately incarcerated as well.

Even when a prisoner's sentence is up they still face a huge problem of being locked into a cycle from which they can not escape. They are supposed to be productive members of society in a society that is no longer productive for a large sector of the population. They are put in a position of being undesirable to employ in neighborhoods where employment is already almost impossible to find. Finding it hard to support themselves they usually turn back to crime. A 1982 study by the New York based Vera Institute of Justice noted that -

"A person coming out of prison has four chances,... He can get a job, which will be difficult; he can go on welfare, which is demeaning and difficult;... he can commit crimes; or he can die... If jobs are not accessible, more will opt for crime."

As well as needing to find other ways of dealing with crime and those that commit anti-social behavior, we also need to find out how to stop a prison system that is out of control. Joel Olson reminds us that -

"We need to separate the issues of imprisonment from the issue of crime; they are not about the same things, and one does not cure the other."

Although stopping institutions that foster anti-social behavior is a serious undertaking we must organize both on the inside and out side of the prison system if we wish to abolish it.

Richard Nixon referred to the prison system as "a convincing case of failure." He could not have been more dishonest with this comment. Prisons serve their purpose well as instruments of social control; they make the American system with all its injustice possible. Prisons are expensive (for every dollar lost on the crime society spends eight dollars to catch and punish the criminal) and completely impractical if we are seriously committed to stopping crime. We must see them as serving a crucial role in the preservation of an unequal, racist, and classist social, political, and economic order that the American *system rests upon.*

Many of the facts in this article taken from *Criminal Injustice* edited by Elihu Rosenblatt, South End Press - Boston Ma. 1996.

In county jails, Latinos comprise fourteen percent of the prison population - about twice their proportions in the larger population and Native Americans are disproportionately incarcerated as well.

Prisoners need our support in many different ways. On the week of January 13th - the 17th the Evergreen Political Information Center and local activists will be hosting a week of prison awareness. If you are interested in doing prison activism contact-

EPIC TESC CAB 320 Olympia Wa. 98505 ph# (360) 866-6000 ex.6144

Books to Prisoners needs books on Black history, dictionaries and donations. If you have books you would like to donate there are drop off boxes at the EPIC office (third floor of the CAB building on campus) and at the Liberation Cafe (above Bulldog News downtown).

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Putting Children in Their Place With the Rest of the Dignified Peoples

Robin Landsong

How have human beings survived oppression and abuse? What does it do to a person to be denied a life lived according to one's own values and ethics? How do we remain intact, our psyche, our spirit, our dignity, our truth, our visions, and our values? What is the response from people when they are treated as second class, unimportant, not believable, a minority, abnormal? There are as many different answers as there are people who have survived injustice. I ask these questions because I do not see learning about the struggles of other people as some P.C. altruism. I need it to see how others have lived in a hostile world. I think we all need to see where we fit in relation to history and where we are going. I watch people make inappropriate comparisons about humans surviving hardship. While I may be able to relate to another's grief, I have to be careful to respect the differences of our circumstances before I say, "I know how you feel." I ask for that same respect. The differences are important. What do Native Peoples, African-Americans, children of sexually abusive parents, Migrant workers, lesbian and gay people, and women who have had reproductive violations have in common? What are the differences? In the first section of this article I build a model of questions we can ask to realize what makes one's history of oppression different from another's. It matters to know and honor the differences because we can learn better when we understand we don't know each others experience without listening. By truly understanding oppression we are then better prepared to change it. It is a loss to us all when the assumption is made that we are all the same, and "I know how you feel, therefore I don't need to listen to you speak". The first benefit of listening to each other is being able to learn without having been through something personally. A second benefit of listening to each other is then we can find we are not alone. Recently when I was grieving family I lost in war, I searched for one thought to comfort myself. I remembered I am not the only one who cares and notices injustice was done. I do not grieve alone. Most people can relate to loss, few other Americans can relate to the war I lived through, no one else can know exactly what it was like for me. I know I am connected to all the other people who work to change violent ways, and that puts me in great company. In the second section of the article I look at abused children as a specific group of oppressed people. I go through my model of questions to see the specific circumstances of their oppression. I then discuss a variety of ways children cope.

Difference in Oppression

How do we adapt our identity when outside groups force drastic change to our practices? In a film about Native Women Artists, I saw the turmoil in a woman's face while she went into a white owned store to sell her bead work. She kept repeating, "It just isn't right," as her husband helped her unload her work from the back of their car. Within her lifetime she has been thrown into a capitalist economy. She repeated over and over that when she was taught the skill by her elders they never intended it to go up for sale. How does it change a group to live in the filth of another's lies, and lack of ethics? Has the oppression been in one phase of someone's lifetime, over their entire life, back to their parents, or over seven generations? Was the insult directed at one's people or targeted at an individual in isolation? Does one live day in and day out with constant reminders that they could be assaulted again at any time, or was it just one time a person felt threatened, and in the rest of their life they feel protected and powerful? I felt scared for my life when the L.A. Riots were happening and ripple effects were being felt in all the big cities. I feared that some justifiably enraged Person of Color may decide to randomly take out their unjustified violence on white me. But it did not change my ways of being safe, because as a womyn I already watched my back. Did a big white man feel a threat? Would it be the first time in his life, or would it remind him of his violent alcoholic parent? Is the oppressed/assaulted person heard, believed, and responded to by someone who could help? Does the legal system consider the victim an important enough person of this society to do something about the violation? Who valued Rodney King? Were changes made in the system because people were outraged that valuable community member(s) were treated unfairly? A friend recently told me he read in an English news paper about an event in Belgium. When many high ranking officials were charged with violating children in a sex ring, the people of that country were so outraged that 10 percent of the country's population took to the streets in demonstration. Big changes were enacted. Who do we consider worth fighting for, covering on the news, or changing for? How did people respond to the AIDS epidemic when it was more isolated to the gay community? How about now that it affects gay and straight alike? How do these institutionalized biases affect the self identity of devalued people? I met a white man who had served in the military during the Vietnam war. Although he was never involved in combat, he started receiving compensation checks for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He had not even been tested or applied for them. I have filed two police reports and made five appeals when I was denied Violent Crime Compensation for my "off the chart" level of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I got the message quite clearly that the state I came from considered me the "offender" for challenging the silencing system. What status do we need to be to have our grievances heard? Another question to ask about difference of oppression is where was the scene of the crime? Was it one's homeland, one's house, one's body? I met an Asian American man who was assaulted by the Klu Klux Klan. In the assault they cut the letters KKK onto his chest. He stated that he now had a better understanding of the violation to women who have been raped because the violence was directed so personally at his body, and that he walked around with the evidence on his chest. We must honor the significance that for the court room to get their facts he must open his shirt, and women rape Survivors must open their legs. He did have plastic surgery to change the scar. Imagine being in a courtroom having a group of men in suits with power discuss your hymen as evidence for invalidation. Imagine the strength it takes to withstand this second violation as the only legal means of recourse to achieve "justice". Too many women don't have to imagine never being able to get away from the scene of the crime.

While I may be able to relate to another's grief, I have to be careful to respect the differences of our circumstances before I say, "I know how you feel."

How People Cope

How people choose to cope with the oppression directed at them relates to the nature of the oppressor/abuser. Was the injustice done out of misinformation, or direct malicious intent? Does the oppressor /abuser take responsibility for the violation or blame the people they have damaged? Something like, "I didn't hurt you. It was your own stupid fault. I was doing you a favor by giving you this job, raping you, putting you back in your place, your class. It was for your own good." My answer to how people survive is that it is in the range of as best they can, or they don't. People die in many ways: emotionally, spiritually, culturally, economically, physically. I have sat with someone dear to me as he physically died of grief about how horrible people can be to one another. Emotional and spiritual death can look like someone turning into an oppressor, abuser, hate based person. Certainly there are racist white lesbian, and homophobic People of Color. There are homophobic lesbians for that matter. Putting out hate is not justified by being the recipient of hate. It just does not get us any further along. Self protection is a healthy response to threat. I consider being hate based a death in part of a whole person, or at least a state of not being fully alive.

Abused Children as an Oppressed Group

In this society children as a group do not have power to speak of. Hopefully their individual personal power is respected by the adults in their world. If it is not they do not have the means of recourse available as adults may have available. Depending on age, children are physically, financially, and emotionally dependent on those around them for their survival. If they happen to be unlucky enough to be born to intentionally abusive parents they generally do not have options to change their situation. A seven year old, with the legal system as it is, can't make a phone call and have her rapist father put away. Parents can make a call and have their children put away. Too many times children in this society are not heard, not believed, not seen, and not considered contributing members of this country. Through the lens of the questions I have raised about differences in oppression, let's look at the coping options for a young child in a severely abusive house. If a child is being abused/oppressed by a parent it is most likely that the damage goes back generations. It is a baffling situation to have one's own kin be the enemy. This is different than the enemy being an "other" outside group. Children are often experiencing the insult in isolation, possibly only with other siblings who also have no societal power. Children of extreme sadistic ongoing abuse live every minute in threat even if violence has not happened since last week. It has a profound effect on a developing child to not know if they are going to live to their eighth birthday, or even until morning. The scene of the crime for a child being sexually assaulted is a tender growing body. They are being denied the right to live peacefully in their own body, their home land. To be physically manipulated is a horrendous disrespect to a child's power to control their own body. Children "tell" of their abuse in all kinds of ways. Abusers train children to cover up, and be silent in all kinds of ways. Abusers train society to not see as valid the ways children tell. Abusers/oppressors institutionalize bias against the ways children cope in an impossible circumstance. I applaud any one who answers "yes" to the questions, "Are children worth fighting for, believing, and making change on their behalf?" So how do abused children make it through? How do young human beings remain intact in the "private" war zone? When they emerge, what condition is their psyche, spirit, dignity, truth, vision? The costs are high. Think of the energy it takes to survive the assaults, cover the evidence, keep the secret, be in denial about the intolerability, avoid physical annihilation, and heal from the physical damage. All this coming from a child who never really sleeps at night for years. A small body that is supposed to be growing and developing is in a constant chemical state of flight or fright. What is the compromise to try and develop personal values and ethics when someone with power is imposing their lack of ethics and skewed practices? Echoing my answer from before, children survive abuse in the range of as best they can, or they don't. Children are killed by

(Continued next page)

A Lesson in Geopolitics

Jerome Johnson

A reader saw me in the store the other day. After exchanging greetings and catching up with each other, he shook his head. "Did you hear about how they railroaded Boutros-Ghali out of his job? Talk about nerve!"

I nodded, listening.

"Nerve, and the arrogance of Empire," he fumed as we walked across the parking lot. "Dig it. The United States has never liked Boutros-Ghali. He tried to be his own man, and to help the U.N. be truly independent and non-partisan --non aligned, you might say--in the post Cold War era. No more dominance by the West. He wasn't in office a week before the United States started threatening him--courtesy of Ambassador Albright--that unless he ran the U.N. the way the U.S. wanted, Congress wouldn't pay hundreds of milions of dollars in unpaid dues and fees."

That sounds like blackmail, I commented.

My friend snorted and opened his car door. "Tellin' it like it is. The reason is because back in the '70s and '80s, as the U.N. grew more independently-minded, member countries began opposing U.S. and Western policies through the U.N. As more Third World nations joined, they accepted the U.N. Charter at its word and began making it a truly world body. They started to recognize that through the U.N., they had power to fight modern imperialism, neo-colonialism. Disenfranchised peoples like the Palestinians had a world forum in which to address their grievances against their oppressors.'

As more Third World nations joined, they accepted the U.N. Charter at its word and began making it a truly world body.

And a lot of the time, these oppressors were the U.S., its corporations, and those of its allies.

"Right." Another bag went into the car. "So the U.S., led by fulminating Congresspeople, decided that we weren't going to pay dues and fees if the U.N. was going to talk bad about us, oppose our imperialist policies and denounce our atrocities -- Central America in the '80s, for instance)."

I remember that, I said, as well as how the General Assembly intensely opposed the U.S.-backed Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Some Americans wanted the U.S. to withdraw from the U.N., or at least evict it from New York, and the Emperor just let them howl.

"Now, we're $1.3 billion behind, more than half the entire U.N. deficit. This time, if the U.N. doesn't 'reform its management and bureaucracy', no money."

How can that happen without money to operate?

"That's what Boutros-Ghali and the rest of the U.N. want to know. He did the best he could, you know. The West blamed him for Bosnia, even though the West didn't listen when he first sounded the alarm. Then--being Euro-Americans--they obsessed about Bosnia when Boutros-Ghali called for action in Ethiopia, the Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi. The only reason Clinton went into Somalia was because as a new President, he didn't want to be viewed as a racist, and because of U.S. policy started by Bush. Then Clinton forced a change in the mission and went after Aidid. When Aidid beat his overconfident Army Rangers and Somalia turned sour, they tried to blame Boutros-Ghali again." He closed the car door and leaned on it to light a cigarette.

So what do you think of the new Secretary General?

"Kofi Annan? Don't know much about him, but I like what I've read so far. Career U.N., Under Secretary for Peacekeeping. Young guy, not even 60. From Ghana.

I understand his appointment was something of a compromise.

"You could say that. Annan's the first Secretay General from black Africa. By the U.N.'s tradition, it's black Africa's turn to nominate a candidate from their region. The Assembly was leaning in that direction to start, and the U.S. opposition to Boutros-Ghali aroused so much anger worldwide that they had to compromise. The U.S. wanted him out but they couldn't control who the nominee would be, and the African nominee would be elected--guaranteed, no matter how nasty the debate (live on CNN) would be. And Boutros Ghali supported Annan."

So what happens now?

My friend shrugged and got behind the wheel. "I dunno. The whole world is furious because not only did they have to put up with Albright in the U.N., Clinton's added insult to injury by making her Secretary of State. "

But she's the first woman Secretary of State, and she has strong support in Congress. Even from Republicans.

"That don't make no smoke for me. It ain't your gender, it's your agenda." He chuckled. "Imperialist Cold Warriors, we don't need. A new century's comin'. It's a new day, the world knows it. We'll see. Hey, I gotta go, but happy holidays and keep up the good work."

He put the car in gear and drove away, his turn signal blinking cheerfully in the cold December night.

(Children, continued)

their abusive parents. Children fail to thrive and give up. Children commit suicide to escape. Many live. How? And what approval or disapproval do they get from those privileged to not be in their situation? People can learn to adapt to trauma in mind boggling ways. There are as many "best" ways to survive as there are children in incestuous homes. Children leave their body to watch from a distance. In some circumstances children fight, but that uses energy, and can result in more violence from the abuser; which means more marks, more bruises, more pulled muscles, and broken bones that the child will have to cover at school. In some circumstances to fight is to be killed. Other times, even with the same abuser, to fight is to save oneself. Fighting can look like: running away, doing drugs, hiding the assailants drugs. Being "seductive" is a way to have power in ridiculous circumstances. While a child can not really stop the abuse, s/he can learn ways to beat them at their own game. Children who have to survive in sexual abuse can learn to avoid the unbearable waiting for the violence by developing the sense of power to get the inevitable assault started and therefore over with. Adults are responsible to not impose themselves on children in any way. No matter what a child does it is the adults responsibility to not take advantage of innocence and vulnerability. A physical adaptation that matches with leaving the body is to go limp. Relaxed muscles do not rip. A child vaginally or anally raped by an adult endures damage and unspeakable pain. Those who are assaulted on a regular basis develop a physiology that adapts to get the body through as best as possible. Having vaginal secretion when the assault begins is going to result in less damage. Because this is a physiological response similar to what happens during consensual adult sex people make the mistaken leap that the child "enjoyed it". No, she survived it. An analogy is that paramedics have found intoxicated people have fewer upper body and arm injuries in a car accident because they did not have the normal response of tensing up and putting hands on the dashboard before impact. If someone was in a car accident once a week and trained themselves to relax on impact it does not mean they liked it or wanted it. It means they found the best way to survive. Meanwhile Survivors of ongoing incest are condemned by the courts, their assailants, and everyone else in denial, for surviving as best as they could. Why don't we stop asking what the child did wrong, and start talking about the abusers responsibility to stop doing damage. I am watching America grapple so poorly with the facts of repressing the occurrence and details about the assaults. Let's see — if grown adults safe from being abused can't deal with the shocking, painful reality that children are beaten, tortured, and killed by their parents and others — but we expect a child in the situation with another ten or fifteen years of abuse to look forward to remain fully present to that reality? And they are expected to be pleasant, cheerful and achieve in school. Sorry, something has to give. If a child is fully present to the reality of their circumstances (not forgetting, not numbing) they are probably spewing with rage and out blowing up cars, assaulting their teachers, and maybe trying to kill their parents or themselves. Picture a seven year old girl planning to make it so her father never degrades her again. It happens. Children do reach a breaking point. People forget and avoid unpleasant things all the time. "Oh I forgot about the electric bill". Repressing memories of abuse is forgetting to an extreme degree for extreme circumstances. Children with no one to tell, no support, and no capacity to process irreconcilable tragedy have to save it for later. They box the details and their emotions away like toxic waste, and get up and go to school. If the abuse is life threatening, ongoing, and ensues before developmental age 7, children can develop an advanced complex system to store away trauma and still function. The clinical name is Multiple Personality. The more respectful name is Multiple People. It is developing self-identity, knowledge of personal history, likes, dislikes, talent, beliefs, values, world view, personal strengths, and specialized skills - again and again all in one body. A Multiple is a group of potential allies who survive abuse together rather than one overwhelmed child in isolation. Every Multiple is different. Let me say that again, every Multiple is different, and one representation (such as Sybil) is a disservice to all the different ways of being a Multiple. It is more than a way of coping, it is a way of being.

If you are interested in learning more I recommend *The Courage Journal - Survivors of Ritual Abuse Working for Social Change & Reclaiming Wholeness in Our Lives* which is produced locally, and available by writing to P.O. Box 7208, Olympia, WA 98507. Multiple Personality Disorder from the Inside Out is a good book even though it has the "D" word in the title. It is one of the few books where Multiples actually get to represent themselves. I realize from writing this article I need to write my book (believe it or not I actually cut this down from 30 pages). I will finish with saying, I speak from personal experience of how hard it is to heal and be healthy in a sick society. There are those of us who have courageously lived through the trauma, and are choosing to heal, which includes telling what happened. We have to live in a media filled world that is telling us that we are hurting our families because we tell the truth. Truth only hurts denial. I can live with that. I won't shut up and keep quiet because the torturers told me to, and I certainly won't pipe down because *Seattle Weekly* tells me to. To other Survivors - congratulations for living through the horror. Healing is worth it. Keep talking, every word is revolution.

Robin Landsong is a local survivor activist, educator, musician, and artist. She is available to give presentations to groups interested in learning about how children survive and heal from severe abuse. She and Raven Kaliana are the co-curators for The Art of Healing show scheduled to begin in mid-March at the Washington Center.

On January 24, at the Liberation Cafe Raven Kaliana, William Adams and Robin Landsong will be doing a presentation on the creativity of the survival and healing from Ritual Abuse. The evening will include their visual art, music, educational information, and answering respectful questions. Backlashers are welcome to stay home.

The Seed of Modern Liberal Paralysis Can Be Found in the New Deal of the 30's

Jess Grant

The seed of the modern liberal's dilemma can be found in the reform efforts of the New Deal. Those efforts, when viewed through the lens of mainstream political discourse, can be seen as a definite retreat from the far feistier and idealistic progressive movement that preceded them. Both narrower in scope and more pragmatic, reform liberals abandoned any hope of regulating capitalism and turned their attention instead to ameliorating its worst excesses. When the aperture of discussion broadens, however, both progressivism and New Deal liberalism can be seen for what they are - strategic accommodations to Capital on the part of the State.

Let's take the narrower view for a moment and examine the differences between turn-of-the-century progressivism and the New Deal liberalism of the 30's. Progressive issues tended to begin at the municipal level and move outward, giving them a more democratic flavor than subsequent liberal campaigns, which usually called for federal intervention of some kind. They covered a broader spectrum of issues - from alcoholism and suffrage to child labor and political machinery - than did the later liberals, who largely confined themselves to building a welfare state.

The progressives were also outspokenly skeptical of the emerging corporate world's ability to manage the economy. By the 1890's the U.S. had already been through a number of severe recessions, and the giant industrial trusts had been busy consolidating their economic power. The human tragedy caused by a widening disparity in wealth spurred some to doubt the feasibility of industrial capitalism altogether, and many were drawn to the revolutionary movements of the time. Whether Socialist or Anarchist, Communist or Wobbly, a diverse spectrum of anti-capitalists emerged around 1900 from the wreckage of the new corporate economy.

This broad array of radicals standing to their left allowed progressives considerable leeway in their ability to critique capital, while still accepting its supposed inevitability. (Attacks against radicals during and after World War One gave liberals less room to move in that direction.) In particular, the anti-monopolists were overtly hostile to big corporations, which they considered to be unhealthy concentrations of wealth. Indeed, the ugly consequences of unbridled laissez-faire capitalism were hard to explain away, even for the most avid apologist of Capital. Yet the progressive's proposed cure - increased competition through aggressive trust-busting - never questioned the prerogatives of capital in any fundamental way.

What really changed in the shift from progressivism to liberalism was how federal bureaucrats perceived the role of the State in relation to Capital. Throughout the 19th century, the federal government had made itself useful to Capital primarily through its ability to capture, develop, and then cede natural resources - land to the railroads, grazing rights to the ranchers, water to agribusiness, mineral rights to the miners - all of it predicated on the theft of the indigenous nations' land. The vastness of the American frontier assured that this relationship would last for well over a century, from the founding of the country through the end of the 19th century, providing ample spoils for the conquerors as well as an escape valve for the pressures of social unrest.

Simple logic dictates that a fragile planet of finite resources cannot indefinitely support an economy in which growth is the sole determinant of "health."...Just like capitalism, the State is an historic anomaly that has outlived its usefulness, and our planetary survival now demands that both institutions be abolished.

With the symbolic closing of the frontier, however, federal bureaucrats began to cast about for a new role in the emerging corporate order. Frederick Jackson Turner may have prematurely closed the books on the history of the American west, but he did identify an important watershed in U.S. politics. With no more territories to pacify and a dwindling supply of natural resources to give away, how would federal agencies continue to justify their existence, both to the corporate elites who pulled their strings as well as to the public they ostensibly represented? Liberal hopes of maintaining the social order, and thus their role within it, came to rely on four increasingly servile approaches: the regulatory state, the central-planning state, the welfare state, and the national security state.

Efforts at a regulatory state were typified in the progressive era by the anti-monopolists, who simply didn't trust the industrialists to regulate the business cycle in a reliable way. The rapacity of America's business class had made it increasingly difficult for the government to maintain order, and a series of presidents had grown weary of panicked telegrams from western governors demanding federal troops to put down strikes. It struck some in Washington that a little legislation could go a long way towards making their jobs easier. Successes in this area include child labor and anti-trust laws as well as the mildly pro-union Wagner Act; more recently Capital has chafed at the regulations imposed by environmental legislation.

The central-planning state never really had a chance in this country. The starry-eyed social engineers who promoted this liberal approach in the 30's suddenly found themselves having to explain away Stalin and Hitler. It may have been unfair to compare the central planners of Nazi Germany and the authors of the Soviet Five Year Plans with liberal American state planners, but a state-run economy had become, in the American public's mind, unshakably linked with authoritarianism of the worst kind. Aside from unsuccessful attempts by Roosevelt to wrest control of the wartime economy from the grip of an emerging military-industrial complex, few liberal initiatives have dared suggest direct state planning of industrial production or distribution.

The welfare state is where U.S. liberals finally found their niche. Content to patch up the victims of capitalism's unpredictable business cycles with a sub-minimal social safety net, and to minimize the severity of those cycles with consumer-driven fiscal policies, post-war liberalism confined itself to subsidizing irresponsible corporate behavior by alleviating its worst effects with social programs and deficit spending. This cozy relationship lasted for about forty years, from the mid-thirties to the mid-seventies, until the economy finally contracted again and bickering erupted over how to pay for all those social programs.

The federal giveaways did not cease completely with the closing of the frontier. Technocrats were eager to invent new frontiers, and industrial expansion became more reliant on military innovations and the new markets they helped create. Much of the research and development that was done during the Second World War by the government ended up in the hands of private industry afterwards, and the close links that had been forged between industry and the military during that conflict proved to be mutually beneficial in the post-war economy as well.

The Cold War justified an arrangement in which those lucrative business ties could continue unabated, with the federal government providing both free research and a guaranteed market to its military suppliers. In fact, the bulk of the budgetary deficit in what remains of our current welfare state has been generated, not by social programs, but by this bloated military budget of "corporate welfare."

As the social costs of capitalism mount, and federal resources to compensate for them dwindle, Capital has forced liberals into an uncomfortable corner, where the only role left for government is the national security state. Unwilling to give up the perks of governance, liberals have lined up in support of the new authoritarian approach, where government has been reduced to enforcing class privilege with all the force at its disposal. With little but empty rhetoric left to distinguish them from the conservatives, liberals are now in full retreat.

Perhaps *Z Magazine* said it best when they asked, "if a person sincerely believes that capitalism brings, as a by-product, a host of irritating and even grossly destructive outcomes requiring constant struggle to curb or correct, shouldn't that person be excited to hear about an alternative economic approach with no bad effects? Shouldn't they hope a better alternative is possible? Shouldn't they be depressed when an alternative proposal proves to be worse than the status quo? Shouldn't they then want to try harder to find new alternatives ...(to this) economic system?"

Manning Marable has written, "American liberalism is bankrupt. The belief in an internal, progressive realignment of the democrats is belief in a hopeless illusion never to be achieved or realized so long as the party has some utility to corporate capitalism." Liberals are now paying the price for their New Deal devil's pact, as the balloon payment comes due on a whole lot of guilty privilege.

What the New Deal liberals could never have foreseen, as they maneuvered to create an integral role for themselves in the expanding industrial economy, was just how dangerous both Capital and the State would become in the next half century. Even today, capitalists fail to recognize that the carrying capacity of our planet cannot sustain current levels of industrial expansion. Despite increasingly dire warnings, environmental catastrophes like nuclear and chemical waste, rainforest and species destruction, and ozone depletion proceed apace.

Simple logic dictates that a fragile planet of finite resources cannot indefinitely support an economy in which growth is the sole determinant of "health." Capitalism is like a cancer that devours its host organism in a suicidal bout of gluttony. The global frontier has closed, and there is precious little booty left to plunder.

Nor could liberals have imagined, even as Roosevelt signed the go-ahead order for the Manhattan Project, the long-range implications of atomic weapons. The potentially apocalyptic nature of a modern nuclear exchange between hostile countries has made the nation state, arguably, obsolete. Whatever allure the nation state may once have had has lost its luster in the shadow of the mushroom cloud. Just like capitalism, the State is an historic anomaly that has outlived its usefulness, and our planetary survival now demands that both institutions be abolished.

To the liberal, a world without Capital and the State would be a very bleak world indeed. It would be a world with little meaning and even fewer job opportunities. Yet the true progressive spirit, the underlying search for social justice, remains as steadfast as ever. Tied not to a political party or social contract, but to an unwavering ethical standard that continues to find expression in grassroots organizing campaigns, this spirit is the sole salvation for today's shipwrecked liberal. They must return to it or perish.

Citations Marable, Manning, 1996. Beyond Black and White. New York, NY: Verso Press. Z Staff, 1995. "Worry About the Liberals." Z Magazine, vol. 8 (July), 4-5.

An Open Letter to the Tacoma News Tribune

Class Warfare is Biggest Change

Dave Zink

The Editor *Tacoma News Tribune* PO Box 11000 Tacoma, WA 98411

Thank you for the wake-up call! Your series on *America: Who Stole the Dream?*, by Donald Barlett & James Steele was a tough, but accurate look at America today.

Thomas Jefferson warned "banking institutions and moneyed incorporations" would become tyrants that would threaten our American democracy if not checked. Today, nearly 200 years later, Trans-National Corporations ("TNCs") have subverted our democracy, and have brought our country to the brink of economic ruin. With absentee-ownership the norm, TNCs have few it any ties to the communities in which they operate. They are now multi-national, having allegiance to nothing except profit. Healthy, sustainable communities don't even make it onto the corporate list of priorities. The number one priority of a corporation is to maximize profit. That is their prime reason for existence. They might spend millions on PR to show them as being responsible, but if they took their own propaganda seriously, and started to act responsibly, they would soon lose out in this very competitive, capitalist economic system. When short-term profit maximization is the #1 priority, then everything else - our livelihoods, the environment, sustainability, you name it - must become of lesser priority. It is profitable for the giant oil companies for us to remain addicted as a society to fossil fuels. But are dependency upon foreign oil, involvement in foreign wars, and oil spills in our national interest? Cleaner alternatives exist, but don't expect to see them anytime soon. That might cut into the profit margin. In its youth, the Corporation was revolutionary and progressive. Emerging from the feudal past, in the industrial revolution, this new formation allowed the modern economic engine to be built. This allowed for a standard of living previously undreamed of. But, in the unfolding of history, the corporate system is now long past its robust youth. It appears to be exhibiting the final stages of senile degeneration. As your series illustrates so clearly, it has wasted much of our resource and industrial base, and has become destructive of our economy, the Family, and the very environment we all depend upon. The time has come for us to put this outmoded relic out to pasture. We have outgrown the Corporation and no longer need it.

Today, we have a situation where the tail is wagging the dog. A numerically tiny, but very powerful elite of major stockholders and CEO's are in the driver's seat. This is no conspiracy theory. There is no need to assume a secret conspiracy is afoot when all corporate managers strive to maximize profit. This is typical corporate behavior! To expect them to start behaving responsibly is like expecting an army to adopt pacifism.

The Wall Street Journal estimates that corporate welfare has reached $140 billion each year. If you include subsidies, bail-outs, giveaways, inflated government contracts, tax loopholes, and forgiveness of corporate debt, "Aid to Dependent Corporations" is easily up to $200 billion. Corporations can afford to hire an army of lobbyists to work on our elected officials, then they write it off as a tax deduction. The average citizen can't afford to do that. What do trans-national corporations do with the millions gained from tax breaks and giveaways? If they actually invested in America to provide more good-paying jobs here, it wouldn't be so bad. But they don't. Instead of improving industry in America, they "outsource" work, and even build factories overseas. Much of the investments they do make in the USA goes into buying out other companies. Mega-merges typically result in lay-offs, more homelessness, and less competition. Corporate spending on things that would create jobs isn't as profitable as buying and selling stock shares.

The corporations are not sticking it to us because they've fallen upon hard times. They're doing great! Profits have never been higher - precisely because they are ratcheting up their exploitation of labor and lobbying government for more "gimmies". CEO's are making hundreds of times what their workers - who create all the wealth - are paid. And the disparity is growing.

The old maxim, "He who pays the piper calls the tunes" is right on the mark when it comes to American politics. It takes a lot of money to run for public office these days, and the corporations are the only source that can easily throw around that kind of money. The TNC's are courted by the candidates of both the Republican and Democratic parties for campaign financing. Is it any wonder that legislation follows that further benefits the multi-nationals and hurts the working class?

Class warfare? You bet! We are the victims, and its about time we woke up! The biggest change in American life in the last couple decades has been the redistribution of wealth from the poor and the working class to the rich. Contrary to all the distracting propaganda, this is having a far more profound negative impact on this country than the current teenage-immigrant-welfare-mother-on-drugs boogeyman is. You'll hear that we need to adjust to the "new world order" or "global readjustment". Working class America has shown itself ready to adjust to any reasonable demand. It is the multinational corporations who have been unreasonable, demanding, and inflexible.

Things will continue to worsen until we get at the root of our problems. A day of reckoning is coming. It is nearly inevitable. The longer we postpone resolution of these problems, the more we risk violence when the change does come. Working people in general need to take a look at labor history. It's a heroic, but largely unknown epic. Try Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, for a fascinating and uplifting story that they didn't teach you in high school!

Yes, we are in a bad situation. Things aren't going to fix themselves. And don't look for some "great leader" to miraculously rescue us. No, this is going to be up to us: you and me, the average working Joes and Janes of this country. It isn't hopeless. We have the brains and ingenuity. We can develop the consciousness and determination to organize in our own interests.

I tell you: we have much more in common with that worker in Mexico assembling radios, than we have with the CEO living behind armed checkpoints in a million dollar house! The sooner we realize that, the better.

So what is the answer? In a word, democracy. Working people actually run the economy, but, excluded from the decision-making process, run it contrary to their own interests. If more of us working people were to gain confidence in ourselves, we would soon realize that we can transform this out-dated corporate system into a better, cooperative system.

Yes, its a frustrating situation. But acting out violently will help nothing. We need to focus our attention and energies on three key points where we can actually do something to get out of this mess:

1. Revitalize the labor movement,
2. Build a Labor Party to fight for the interests of the vast majority of Americans. Big Business has 2 parties, we need to build our own ! , and
3. Organize the unorganized, at home and abroad.

Until we reach out in solidarity to help organize workers in places like Mexico, Honduras, and Malaysia for better pay and working conditions, workers in one country will be used to drive down the quality of life for workers in other countries in a global race to the bottom. It may be hard for you to see workers in Malaysia or Guatemala as our allies, but they are. They want the same things we do: a decent living, a brighter future for their kids, freedom from repression. In this NAFTA/GATT age, they face the same adversaries as we do: Reebok and Nike pays workers in Indonesia about $2 a day to make the running shoes you paid $100 for. When we help them organize effectively to demand better conditions, we help ourselves. I tell you: we have much more in common with that worker in Mexico assembling radios, than we have with the CEO living behind armed checkpoints in a million dollar house! The sooner we realize that, the better.

Reducing labor costs as low as possible is critical to the TNCs. That's why they have historically promoted immigration. And that is why they open up operations abroad. The corporate class wants a surplus army of workers. It's a very effective way to keep wages down. It fosters economic insecurity, distrust, and fear between ethnic groups.

Working people - those lucky enough to still have jobs, and the unemployed millions - are told that Labor is just another "special interest group". Don't fall for that. In reality, there are two classes: those who have to work for a living, and those who don't. The vast majority of Americans have to work for a living, or are scraping by on unemployment compensation or in hard-earned retirement. The middle class is disappearing. We need to realize that it is those who can afford to live off their stock or bond investments, without needing to put in an honest day's work all their lives that are the "special interest group". To help bring things into focus, we need to see them as the tiny minority they are.

How can we curb corporate power over our society and environment, while building democracy? We have two options, as I see it. We could try to break up the giants into smaller companies. Our nation has tried that before. It didn't work. One of the inherent drives of a corporation is toward combination. Try to thwart this drive in vain: they will find a way around it. The other option has met with varying degrees of success wherever its been tried: transform them into employee-owned, and democratically-controlled enterprises. Anything a corporation can do, a worker-cooperative can do better! Wherever it has been tried, worker empowerment has dramatically improved workplace productivity. You take better care of something if you own it. The corporate de-facto ruling class has a near-total monopoly over the airwaves. As a result, public exposure is limited to corporation-friendly viewpoints. The range of debate is limited. If a handful of giant corporations, with their own vested interests, control what people can see, hear, and read, democracy is in real trouble. We need to make TV and radio more accessible to the public, not privatize public broadcasting.

It is a prevailing background assumption of our culture, promoted by the corporate entertainment industry, that while the company wears the white hat, the union is the bad guy. The truth is that it is only through organization that we working people have any power at all in society. That means unions. Join one; get involved. At their worst, labor unions are far more open and democratic than corporations at their best.

If you agree with this three-point program, and would like to find out what more you can do, contact the New Unionists at 4419 229th NE, Redmond, WA 98053. You can reach the Labor Party at (206) 382-5712.

A Seed to Grow

Chris Farmer

"America made me crazy...You can dismiss this all as crazy...But go ahead."
-- John Trudell

In the age of supermarkets and fast food, it's hard to remember sometimes that food comes from somewhere beyond some nebulous warehouse that must be even bigger than Top Foods or Safeway. But nevertheless, most food still comes from plants and animals grown and raised on farms and gardens with the help of people.

It is even harder to remember that these plants didn't just miraculously appear on these farms and gardens, but have been passed down with care through generations of our ancestors saving their seed, all the way back to the first farmers at the dawn of agriculture. From within an atmosphere of intimacy between our ancestors and their food crops arose the great diversity of corn varieties, bean varieties, tomato varieties, wheat varieties, and so on -- all living expressions of the care that flowed between plants and humans in each particular place, with each particular people.

Our ancestors helped to bring about this incredible flowering of diversity within our food crops. We, on the other hand, now live in a time of devastating genetic erosion, a mass extinction of crop varieties that our descendants will need as breeding material for their own food crops. We also now live in a time where it is extremely uncommon to live in intimate relationship with the land and the life that feeds us, where seed saving has become just another highly technologized and corporatized industry. I, for one, don't feel comfortable in brushing this all off as mere coincidence.

That the health and integrity of an ecosystem is completely dependent upon the continual adaptation and biodiversity of life within it -- this is a form of sophisticated thinking that our culture is now struggling to incorporate. That likewise the health and integrity of a *people* is completely dependent upon the continual adaptation and biodiversity of life within and around it (especially of their food crops) -- our ancestors had to live daily with this wisdom, or they perished. Their identity and sustenance was wrapped up within their relationships to these plants. They had to take care or die. Of course some of them simply chose to ransack their neighbors, which, of course, was a highly questionable and dubious activity.

Up until recently, the great majority of food crops we grew and ate sprouted from seeds which had been harvested by the hands of either the growers or their neighbors.

Up until recently, the great majority of food crops we grew and ate sprouted from seeds which had been harvested by the hands of either the growers or their neighbors. (Some food crops aren't propagated by seeds, but by tubers or cuttings.) This can be seen as a highly *inefficient* way of producing large quantities of crop seed, that is, if you're willing to externalize the costs of losing the local adaptation and genetic diversity of your food crops. These are costs we have unthinkingly decided to live with in the present global economy. Unfortunately, these are not costs we can survive with.

When we once held those seeds in our hands, we embodied a trust between our Descendants 'N Ancestors (DNA), we gave thanks to both the plants and the people for having taken such good care of each other for so long, we felt the response-ability and the gift of carrying on that legacy. Holding those seeds in our hands was an embodiment of our power as a people.

Those seeds are no longer held in our hands. The power they carry is transforming, but not diminishing. As our seeds undergo massive consolidation within the hands of fewer and fewer transnational corporations, so does our power as a people. As the Grand Inquisitor said to a silent Christ in Dostoevsky's *Brother's Karamazov:*

"Oh never, never can they (the masses) feed themselves without us. No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet and say to us, "make us your slaves, but feed us."

If we stop to remember our history, I think we'll find that this business of ransacking one's neighbors unfortunately became the vein of our ancestry that we somehow chose to explore in a more sophisticated fashion. Care has never disappeared, it has simply been overrun. As it is, the glorified global economy has become a mere euphemism for the age old word "colonization". The sophistication of this colonization has become a smokescreen, concealing the other legacy we carry within our bodies that "taking care" is the source of survival.

It's time, I think, to come to grips with a few things. First, our seed supply has become a colony. Like all colonies, it is being manipulated sheerly for the advantage of those in control, the mantra of advantage being "to maximize the profit, to maximize the profit." As always, the extraction of wealth is done in a way that undermines the source of that wealth, creating a crisis culture. The shine from that extracted wealth can be mesmerizing, even blinding. We need to watch out. Endless shelves of food in ridiculously big boxes called supermarkets has, in actuality nothing to do with food security.

Second, growing a locally adapted and diverse seed supply as a community project is a very real, tangible, and possible way to empower ourselves as a people. I'm not just whistling Dixie on this one. I'm talking about placing the source of our nourishment back into people's hands, and that is a prerequisite for creating a culture which chooses care over colonization. This work is brimming with achievable goals which are inspiring, fascinating, and oftentimes down right yummy. Best of all, this work requires nobody's permission. There are huge obstacles to achieving a local seed and food supply, but as a community, we have the resources, the strength, and the coherency to overcome them.

Third, on the horizon is a time and place when, incredibly, we just may have to ask for permission, or when it just may be too late. The giants of the seed industry are striving furiously for and winning the right to patent seeds. Not to mention that most of the seedstocks for our present agriculture are already being technologized (from hybridization to gene-splicing) way beyond any point that is at all accessible to common people. This defies common sense because it precludes sense which is at all common.. Also, numerous varieties of crops that have the potential to play a large role in localized food and seed self-sufficiency, for this region and many others, could become extinct because of the rapid genetic erosion within these crops. We are now faced with a window of opportunity. No one can step back enough to know how big this window is. This is very timely work.

Fourth, this work has fortunately already begun. For decades now, organic and sustainable farmers and gardeners have been saying that care and stewardship have been too far buried beneath profitability and productivity. And they have been courageously excavating and growing these values. For over two decades, Seed Saver's Exchange, a national nonprofit organization based in Decorah, Iowa, has been working heroically on saving our heirloom crop varieties. Recently, your neighbors have formed the South Sound Seed Saver's Exchange -- enthusiastically dedicating themselves to relearning this lost art. I assure you that you are more than welcome to join any and all of these people in this very rewarding work.

The story of how seed saving became such a highly technologized and corporatized industry, and how this has led to devastating genetic erosion of our food crops -- it's bigger and more complex than I can begin to convey. However, I firmly believe that within it are many of the clues we need to find our way out of being lost within these concrete jungles. But please don't just take my word for it. This is a realm best explored by all of us in our own idiosyncratic ways. But as doorways, let me suggest *Shattering: Food. Politics. and the Loss of Genetic Diversity* by Cary Fowler and Pat Mooney, and also joining this new local seed exchange, growing some crop in your garden, and letting it go to seed.

Chop wood, carry water, save seeds.

Seed Saver's Exchange: Decorah Iowa 3076 N. Winn Rd., Decorah, IA 52101
S. Sound Seed Saver's Exchange (not officially affiliated with SSE) Dave Mitman at (260) 840-9696
Tilth Producers (an organization of organic and sustainable growers in WA dedicated to saner agricultures) PO Box 85056, Seattle, WA 98145
Seattle Tilth (an organization dedicated to organic gardening education and advocacy) 4649 Sunnyside Ave N., Seattle, WA 98103
Other sources of ideas/inspiration: Wendell Berry, Vandana Shiva, John Trudell, and also Gary Nabhan's book *Enduring Seeds.*

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A Portland Visit by a Palestinian Man of Peace

Greg Bye

We (Jews) in America have a special responsibility Netanyahu is counting on blunting U.S. opposition to settlement-building by appealing to a friendly Congress, media supporters like William Safire and A.M. Rosenthal, and Powerful Jewish organizations. It is up to us to thwart these plans. We need to show Congress that most American Jews back a realistic Peace, not endless war. We must write about our concerns in visible media outlets and voice our convictions as the real majority of American Jews. And we need to support organizations committed to a secure Peace.

(Gary E. Rubin, executive director of Americans for Peace Now.)

The United States has never supported our (the Palestinians') ambitions. The United States has been very clear from the beginning that it does not support a Palestinian state. It has never pronounced the words 'self-determination.' They always speak of Political rights and never speak of national rights. We have to change that. Public opinion in the United States is completely different to the administration policy. We have to work as if it were converting great Popular support for Palestinian human rights and Palestinian self-determination. We have never done that. We have to do that.

(Prof. Edward Said, writer and peace activist.)

Elias Chacour is a Melkite Catholic priest whose ministry -- inspired by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount -- is dedicated to "getting his hands dirty for peace." An Israeli Arab, Abuna (Father) Chacour has been, for over thirty years active in promoting a just peace in the Middle East. Between October 20th and 24th, 1996, Father Chacour visited the Portland area, giving talks, participating in workshops for peacemaking, signing books, and other activities. His visit was sponsored by several groups including the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, and the Portland State University's Middle East Studies Center.

On October 20th (a Sunday), Father Chacour gave the sermon at Christ Episcopal Church, in Lake Oswego, Oregon. "I was not born a Palestinian Christian (in Galilee)," he stated. Rather, "I was born a baby with an identity, in the likeness of God," as were his fellow citizens, the Israeli Jews. Although the Jews and the Arabs share a common ancestor, Abraham -- who, as Father Chacour made clear, was an Iraqi, a gentile "living among gentile nations" -- the two peoples have, since 1948, been unable to share the land of historical Palestine as brothers and sisters.

"America," remarked Father Chacour, "is Israel's best friend." And he mentioned that the United States gives Israel about six billion dollars, in aid and loans, annually. Furthermore, he encouraged Americans to maintain the friendship. On the other hand, he hoped that Americans will not come to consider the Palestinians as enemies, as "terrorists" and "dirty Arabs." Instead, he hoped that Americans will extend their friendship to the Palestinians.

Over the years, terrorism has taken a deadly toll on both Arabs and Jews. For his part, Father Chacour condemns terrorism, regardless of the perpetrator. And, when possible, he works to alleviate the suffering of victims. For instance, Father Chacour recently organized a blood drive among Arab students at Prophet Elias College, in Ilbillin, Israel. The collected blood was given to Jewish organizations, for use by Jews wounded in terrorist attacks.

In Father Chacour's view, the Palestinians are "the Jews' victims of the Holocaust." In response to a hideous, deeply ingrained European anti-Semitism, Jews immigrated to Palestine, so that they might live in peace and security in the land of their ancestors. But in the course of the Jews return, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been driven from their ancestral homeland.

According to Father Chacour, Palestinians and Jews are now, as a result of the Jews' return and the subsequent conflict, permanently linked. Furthermore, Father Chacour believes that the two will either learn to live together as sisters and brothers, or continue killing each other as enemies. (Interestingly enough, Israeli political scientist Yaron Israhi also finds that the two are permanently linked. In an interview excerpted in *Tikkun*, Nov.-Dec. '96, Israhi said that "[i]n the long run, the peace process is unstoppable. A war between us and the Palestinians is like a boxing match between Siamese twins. Everytime you hit your rival, it hurts you too. You are inseparable.)

During a visit to Washington D.C., in 1991, Father Chacour refused to visit the National Holocaust Museum because, he said, it makes no mention of "the Palestinian victims of the Holocaust." Instead, Father Chacour, with a $1000 donation, created a Holocaust Memorial Listening Post in Israel. One side of the post reads, in Hebrew, Remember the Arab Victims of the Holocaust. On the opposite side is Remember the Jewish Victims of the Holocaust, in Arabic.

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Along with working towards a just peace between Arabs and Jews, Father Chacour is also concerned with the survival of the "Christian community in the Holy Land." He sadly commented that there has been, in recent years, a steady exodus of Christians from the Holy Land -- largely because of the Arab/ Israeli conflict. Father Chacour encouraged those in Christ Episcopal Church that morning to "visit the Holy Land...see the ancient sights," but to please not "forget the living stones" who remain. The only satisfactory solution, Father Chacour maintained, will come as a result of a political settlement that recognizes the right of national self determination for both Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews -- to include the same right of return to historical Palestine for the Palestinians that Israel claims for Jews. (In a reception that followed the sermon. Father Chacour told of a fairly recent meeting he had with then Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. "Forget about returning to your ancestral village," Peres told Chacour. "It has been nearly fifty years since you and your family left." Father Chacour replied that he had never suggested that Jews, who left the Holy Land for nineteen thousand years, had no right to return. So why did Peres deny Palestinians the same right? In response, Peres promised to not raise that objection again.)

In his sermon, Father Chacour compared the Oslo Accords the signed agreements between Israel and the PLO as a "newborn baby." He sees the "Accords" as but a small step forward, in need of nurturing, and improvements, so that the major outcome will be a politically independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, existing in Peace and security along side of Israel, and among the neighboring Arab nations. (For more on the "Accords," see Chomsky's "A Painful Peace," *Z Magazine* January 1996; and Barsamian's "Edward Said: The Israel/ PLO Accord," *Z Magazine* December 1993.)

In his talk after the sermon, Father Chacour stressed that he does not believe that an independent Palestinian state can be economically viable -- largely because the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza greatly inhibited economic development in those areas. He, therefore, advocates an economic union between a politically independent Israel and a politically independent Palestine.

I also attended Father Chacour's talk at Portland State University, where he sounded the same theme as that made at Christ Episcopal Church: the need for a lasting peace with justice between Jews and Arabs in historical Palestine.

However, at PSU, Father Chacour was presented with several challenging questions, including one which asked whether the Palestinians had forfeited their right to national self-determination in Palestine, because they rejected the UN Partition Resolution of 1947. Father Chacour's response was that no one bothered to ask the Palestinians their position -- not the UN, not the Arab states, not the Zionist Jews. Although the resolution was unfair to the Palestinians the new Jewish state was to be granted 55% of Palestine, even though the Jewish National Fund (JNF) owned less than 7% of the Land, and Jews made up only 30% of the Population -- most Palestinians in 1947 were willing to work within the resolution's framework, to include accommodation for the three hundred thousand Palestinians then living within the territory to be ceded to the Zionists. (For more on the question of the UN Partition Resolution, see Flapan's *The Birth of Israel*; and Said's *The Question of Palestine*.)

Elias Chacour can be reached at the following address: Rev. Abuna Elias Chacour Prophet Elias College P.O. Box 102 Ilbillin, Israel 30012

"For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, there's one striking at the root."
- Henry Thoreau

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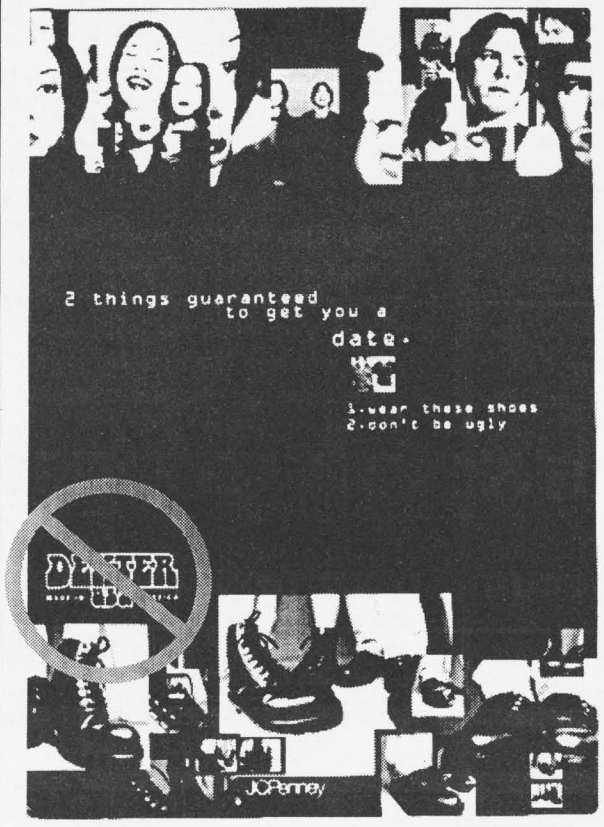

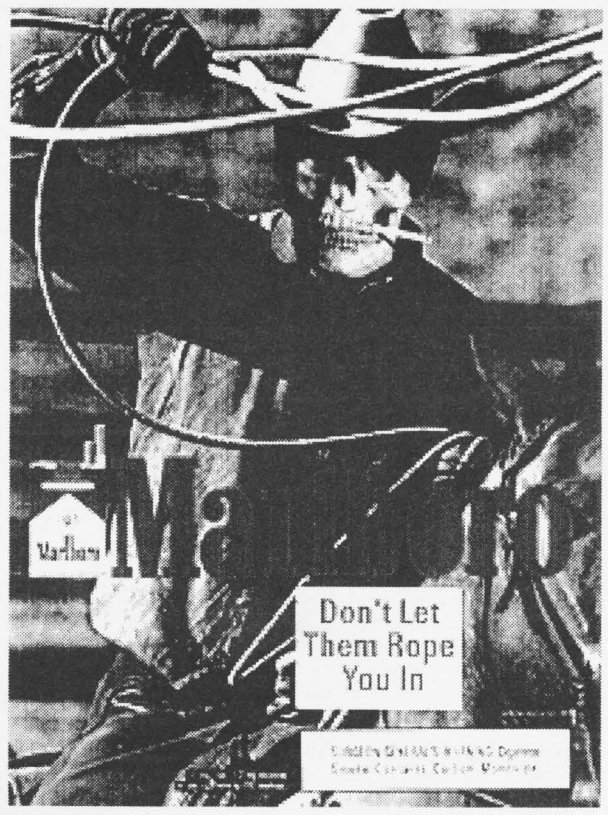

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